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THE ENGLISH SOUL

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(LISTS ON APPLICATION)

THE ENGLISH SOUL

BY

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ROYAL ASIATIC

LONDON

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	PRELIMINARY APOLOGIES	1
II.	THE CITADEL	15
III.	THEIR INSENSIBILITY	41
IV.	REVERIES ON THE SUBJECT OF LOVE	58
V.	ENGLISH SENSUALITY, FRENCH ASCETICISM	108
VI.	FAIR PLAY	158
VII.	RELIGION	170
VIII.	SPORT	207
IX.	THE ÆSTHETIC SENSE	215
X.	THE LOVE OF GARDENS	228
XI.	AN AFTERNOON OUT OF SORTS	250
XII.	CONCLUSION	262

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY APOLOGIES

"Parle-nous de ses choses.
Mais je n'y entends goutte.
Parles-en d'autant plus! A force d'expliquer ce que tu ignores, peut-être enfin le comprendras-tu."

JOURNEYING in a motor-car through a foreign country is calculated to give the traveller false impressions. Speed distorts his vision. It disorganizes the lines of the landscape, lending him a wrong notion of its proportions. It disguises the relation and the distance between one thing and the next, and even misleads him as to the traits of salient objects. The effect of perspective shuts in the far-off scene, though it lie fair and open on all sides; a group of trees crowning a hill may leave with him the memory of a forest. Again, the traveller is deluded by his immediate sensations. Seen from the hot and dusty road, how exquisite seems the freshness of the smallest green hollow! On the face of each passer-by he reads his own cares and joys, and imparts to each scene the colour of his own soul. So the process of self-deception goes on. And, after all, what harm has been done? The traveller *thinks* he has seen!

Those who seek to know the intimate feelings of a strange people are in like case with my traveller. They realize no more than he with how much of their own personality they endow all they look at; and they give innocent utterance to not a few falsehoods and even more absurdities.

It is startling—and often offensive—to hear the foreigner's candid opinion of one's countrymen. In a certain book by Sir A. Conan Doyle, the hero is plainly intended to portray the average Frenchman —a person who on every page shows himself idiotically gallant and prodigiously maladroit. This singular being is just a Frenchman viewed from a distance by an Englishman in a hurry. True, Sir A. Conan Doyle is scarcely a universal mouthpiece of English opinion, and the book in question is not greatly important. Yet it, and its like, inevitably set up in one a futile desire to show that French courage is not so fantastic, nor French manners so bad, as they are painted. And when another English author cites once more the hoary legend of our sensuality and materialism, and proves it by asserting that we call a certain shrub "laurel-sauce," though as a matter of fact we always call it "poets' laurel," the temptation is strong to retort, "Pray tell a few stories on yourselves!" Sound advice that, which all of us have yearned to give the foolhardy stranger airing unasked his views on our domestic matters.

Yet everybody has tried it himself. And I mean to try it, too, though with misgivings suited to my

pretensions. For, after all, why should I rush in? If my craving to write a book about England grows uncontrollable, why not confine myself to telling harmless tales about haunted castles, where ghosts revisit the glimpses of the moon beneath ancestral portraits by Holbein? Why not describe the incomparable gardens, the brilliant social functions, the Salvation Army meetings, the handsome people—any or all of the sights of England which one need not understand in order to enjoy? Why pry into secrets, why seek out the beautiful, the humorous, or the pathetic meaning of everything? Who asks why English flowers grow with such expressive art; why English people so treasure the past as to preserve their ancient houses all intact from one fleeting generation to the next; why the very ghosts of England have so strong a sense of duty; why eating, drinking, sleeping, waking—in short, merely living or manifesting life—are in England so great a delight; why luxury there takes on a form so noble and natural, so much more justifies itself than in other lands; why the men and women have such fine figures; why English hearts are rent with pangs so different from ours—who, I say, asks these questions or speaks of these matters; who pretends to talk about the English soul; except the very bold and the very simple? And who knows anything about it after all?

The greatest indiscretion has its explanation, if not its excuse. This is mine—I admire England. Who does not admire her, even of those that hate her

—and I protest that I love her. I love her with the intimate tenderness we have for our earliest dreams.

If our memory were long enough we should see in our likes and dislikes chiefly the result of rudimentary notions of pleasure and pain acquired when as children we first encountered the possibilities and resistances of the outer world. The basis of our personality is built of certain images which then invaded our consciousness, to fall at length into the subconscious zone where they persist. They gave form and destiny to our original, undeveloped selves. The chance feeling that reveals to the child his capacity for emotion predisposes the man to a particular category of emotions. That which first makes him dream opens the inevitable after-route to his imagination. For what are we but recollections?

My only excuse for writing about England is that my love for her was born on the same day with my consciousness.

When I was still unaware that Europe existed I knew that England did. It lay very near—a sort of continuation, I thought, of my play-ground; partly mine, in fact. For a long time I thought in English; and one's thought-language has power to permeate one's mind with images in its own shape. Each word is potent, in sound, in texture, in derivation, in the mysterious complexity bestowed by time. Through words our needs and aspirations approach more nearly the needs and aspirations of those who evolved them. Words bring stranger souls to mingle with our soul.

I quarrelled, I made up, I played with my dolls, in English. I sang English songs. The first book I remember to have read was an English book; and as for the second, I thought for a long time, and am still vaguely convinced that it, too, was English. These two books taught me much—as later life has shown me.

The first book, called "Rosamond," contained the adventures of a little girl. I recall only one incident, but I cherish the memory of it, as the beginning of that study which sometimes gives me the delusion that I understand the English—even that my understanding is born of a little kinship with them.

This was the adventure of Rosamond. When once walking with her mother she saw in a chemist's window a beautiful purple jar, clear and glowing like a brilliant ruby. The splendour of this jar troubled with desire the mind of Rosamond. She longed for it so ardently and besought her mother so persistently that that lady—evidently of an ironic turn—at length bought it for her.

You can guess the rest. At home with her treasure, Rosamond wished to fill it with flowers; but it proved to contain an unpleasantly odorous chemical, which she promptly threw away. Alas, the jar straightway lost all its colour and splendour, these being but properties of the loathsome fluid. The jar itself was only common glass. Rosamond wept. She had made once for all the unforgettable discoveries that truth is not always—in fact seldom—what it seems to be; that a nasty liquid can give

splendour to common glass; that too strong desire is an element of error; that one should not love, nor hope, nor believe without guarantees; that one must learn through suffering; that it is better to leave the purple jars gleaming in their show-windows and hasten past about one's business, forgetting imprudent desires. To learn all this at one blow is cause enough for tears. Rosamond wept.

Little stories of this kind exist in the children's literature of every nation. But elsewhere than in England they remain within that restricted field. In nearly all English books, whether serious or light-minded, I have met with Rosamond and her purple jar. I have found the moral at the end of the story, the principle immediately derived from the fact, the constant exhortation to self-improvement and the inevitable moral symbolism attached to the most material affairs. The story of Rosamond and her jar presents to a nicety the ever-present attitude of spiritual discipline. I became its unresisting victim.

The second of my English books was the "Arabian Nights' Entertainment" in an illustrated edition. I can still see its green binding, ornamented with gold stars and crescents. A strange document to serve as evidence in an inquiry upon the English soul! And yet, is it so strange after all?

The "Arabian Nights' Entertainment," even expurgated, even judiciously doctored by the translator, is still the Orient. And the English have drawn much from the Orient. The Bible has

stamped with its own impress their spirit and their character. It lies at the bottom of everything. All their grandparents read it, even the grandparents of those who read it no longer. Their subconscious selves are saturated with it. For centuries the fiery imagery, the sanctified despotism, the fanatic pride of the Orient have flowed in their blood. Who knows—perhaps the civilization of the Orient has existed only to produce England! At all events, it has bequeathed to the English more, much more, than we realize. And just as we are not surprised to trace the features of a little boy in the portrait of his ancestor, we find it not unnatural to discover in the literature of the East traits which count with us as English.

I have often re-read those Arabian tales which enchanted my childhood; and each time I have recognized a larger number of Englishmen. The illustrator of the book knew what he was about. His Eastern potentates of the powerful jaws and the direct gaze are like as brothers to the young sporting gentlemen of Cambridge. They bear the strongest family resemblance to the stout-hearted tiger-slayers of the present day. And the Princesses of the green book have the very same regular features, the same proud cold glance, as those admirable young ladies one sees reading in canoes under spreading willows on the Thames. I have seen in the Row more than one descendant of Parizade, that charming and strong-willed Persian Princess who triumphed over so many frightful perils in order to obtain the talking bird, the singing

tree, and the yellow water—three unique curios which would greatly enhance the splendour of her palace.

Is it the reading of the "Arabian Nights," or a native instinct similar to that of the Eastern inventors of these marvellous tales that has given the English such a taste for hidden treasure and venturesome discovery? In the "Arabian Nights" coffers of pearls are found buried at the foot of trees; people are carried up to eagles' nests and find enormous diamonds on the way; jars full of gold are constantly being discovered in unexpected places. And in England—are there not a thousand and one books written around some fabulous and maleficent Eastern jewel, which appears and disappears at will and ends by killing off everybody concerned? Are there not horrific narratives of perils incurred by valorous youths who set out to find a precious something or other kept in a haunted castle or inaccessible grotto, or in some trackless region inhabited by frightful savages, of whom it is necessary to kill some and convert the others to Protestantism in order to come at the secret? How like they are, all these determined English heroes, to my turbanned friends! And precisely as in my green book, the English narratives set great store by hidden treasure, but even more by mystery, and most of all by vicissitudes, risks, and efforts of the will. True, in the Arabian tales the Will is personified, and becomes the benevolent genie, who never fails at any crisis; while in the English books it wears no allegorical dress, but remains simply the will—a subject pecu-

liarly capable of rousing passionate interest in the breast of the English reader.

And the moral of the Arabian tales, which I contend are the source of the yellow, blue, and red diamonds of English literature—what is the moral of the "Arabian Nights' Entertainment"?

There are flying carpets to carry you whither you will; talking animals to reveal precisely what you need to know; fairies who tactfully intervene at the right moment. Kings lose their thrones and recover them; youths and maidens are separated from their homes and undergo some test of their quality in order to find them again; noble ladies bear unjust suspicion and are rehabilitated in the fulness of time. Everything turns out well in the end; but always after vicissitudes. The conclusion of these parables, so weighty with common sense and optimism, is that good comes out of evil, that within each man resides the means to build his fortune, re-establish his honour, win him his heart's desire; that for the energetic there is no such thing as final ill-fortune or irremediable failure; that on the contrary failure itself is useful, since as long as one lives one can and must begin again. No, there is no doubt that the green book was an English book!

Of all the stories in the green book, that of Aladdin seemed the most significant. Do you remember Aladdin? He has taught me deep things about our cousins across the Channel—more than I have acquired from many a ponderous volume.

Aladdin was a boy who began badly. He had no

leanings towards the tailor's trade, nor any other, preferring to be a street arab. As Prince Hal prepared in debauchery for the victory of Agincourt, so Aladdin preluded his lofty destiny by vagabondage.

Now when one frequents public places too assiduously one picks up undesirable acquaintances. Aladdin met a wicked magician who wanted to possess himself of a wonderful lamp, and was in search of an innocent person to help him to it. He chose Aladdin for his purposes from among a host of street lads, because, being a good physiognomist, he perceived him to be brave and intelligent. After the necessary incantations he took him to the mouth of a cave and bade him enter. But first by way of fixing his attention he gave him a sound cuffing. Such treatment would have made a little Italian boy take to his heels, and would have deprived a little German of all initiative. But it merely stimulated Aladdin; it made him more apt, more proud and more worthy, putting him in a frame to accomplish anything—as the same treatment does the little Eton boy who is the voluntary slave of his elder fellow-pupil.

Aladdin listened to the directions of the magician, who told him how to procure the lamp, without concealing that he risked his life in the enterprise. The brave youth attached no importance to this detail. The blows he had received had roused in him the instinct of self-sacrifice and the furious hunger for success which are the twin bases of sport. He feared nothing. He brought the lamp from the cave, passing through a garden where the

trees hung full of pearls and topazes. But at the mouth of the cave he refused to give up the lamp until the magician should have helped him out. He showed thereby a keen sense of realities and knowledge of the obligations involved in a contract. He had done his part—it was now for the magician to do his. But that wretch, having all the time intended to do away with Aladdin as an inconvenient witness, again violently demanded the lamp. The youth remained firm. Now the magician, like all the enemies of England, was totally lacking in constancy of purpose. The refusal put him so beside himself that he renounced possession of the ardently-desired object of his search in order to indulge the barren satisfaction of anger. By means of three words uttered in a language unfamiliar to all honest men, he closed the earth above the unhappy boy and betook himself elsewhere to perform his devilries.

Aladdin, the ragamuffin, behaved at this crisis with great propriety. Since he was to die, he said his prayers with gentlemanly resignation and commended himself to God. But in so doing he happened to rub a ring which the wizard had placed on his finger to aid him in the undertaking of the lamp. The ring summoned a genie, who whisked him out of the cave and home to his mother with the greatest despatch. Thus did the piety of the youth receive its reward. Moreover, he was now master of the lamp, and early learned that by rubbing it he could call up another genie, of fearsome aspect but good intentions, who would execute any orders Aladdin chose to issue.

Did our hero, on discovering the means of power

at his command, at once procure himself a life of splendour and the gratification of his caprices? By no means. He kept his lamp several years without perceiving its possibilities. He thought slowly. He could grasp near and tangible facts and draw their direct conclusions. But remote consequences he neither saw nor cared for, having a truly English antipathy for generalization. The lamp provided him with meals, which the genie served upon silver plates. These he sold, and lived upon the proceeds, not having recourse again to the lamp until the last sou was spent, and thinking no more than this about the whole matter.

Yet the possession of such an object as the lamp worked its slow reform. We know that a man of property is more virtuous than one without any. Aladdin ceased to run about the streets, and began to educate himself. Not with books—he did not deem it important to learn the abstract signs for actualities. What interested him were the things themselves and their graspable reality. He did not go to school; he frequented the bazaar, talked with the merchants, and saw the wares brought in from foreign countries. Thus he learned much that was vital and living of the customs of strange peoples.

In a few years Aladdin had become a young man of charming presence, not lettered, but well-informed and experienced. He continued in his simple life a long time—might perhaps have done so always if he had not one morning seen the beautiful Princess Badroulbadour and fallen in love with her. In that moment all was changed. With nothing to conquer

he had remained half-unconscious of the power of his lamp. If his energies had not been roused he would have continued to slumber. A definite aim, involving some difficulty, presented itself, and at once his spirit was on fire. That which his intelligence in a state of repose had not comprehended his will-power grasped. He understood what his lamp was worth now that there was something to do with it. And he acted with beautiful decision. He got from the genie some incomparable jewels, raised in one night a palace of gold, silver, and precious stones, convinced the Sultan, married the Princess, and lived high in public esteem.

At length, one fine day the magician came back, stole the lamp, and carried off the palace and the Princess to Africa. Aladdin was left forlorn. But well-tempered souls are never quite without resource—moreover, the ring, which had once before saved him, he still possessed. Thanks to it he was transported to the distant spot where his wife was lamenting their separation.

If he had been a philosopher, Aladdin, pausing here to analyze his case, would have discerned in this fortuitous loss of a fortuitous good fortune nothing to be wondered at. He would have adjusted his life to the recent incident as entirely natural and just, though unpleasant. But Aladdin was not a philosopher. He was a man of action, and solidly persuaded of his rights. The conviction was strong in him that in making the lamp the higher powers had had nothing else in view than to give it to him or to let him win it; that destiny had

marked the lamp for his and his alone—for the sufficient reason that he was he. He knew that in overcoming all obstacles between him and the lamp he was merely obeying the decrees of Providence. The virtuous Aladdin poisoned the enchanter, as was proper, moral, and in harmony with the designs of Heaven. He restored palace and Princess to their former place, and became King of the country. This was also natural, in a nation of realists, where success means merit.

The edifying history closes with a paragraph which makes comment unnecessary:

"Your Majesty," said Sheherazade, "will not have failed to perceive that the magician was a man possessed by the inordinate desire for riches, which he sought to gain by the most abominable means—means capable of acquiring wealth, but not of preserving it. Whereas Aladdin, from the most humble beginnings, rose to a throne; because he knew how to put his riches to their proper use—that is, to attain the ends he had in view."

Thus spoke Sheherazade.

The story of Rosamond presents an epitome of the English conscience. The story of Aladdin depicts the triumph of the English will.

It is because I read Rosamond and Aladdin before the fairy-tales of Perrault that I venture to commit to paper these many follies and harmless falsehoods concerning the English soul. It will not matter much after all—my vain discourse can harm no one, and I have taken an exceeding pleasure in it.

CHAPTER II

THE CITADEL

"LEAR. Dost thou know me, fellow?
KENT. No, sir; but you have that in your countenance which I would fain call master.
LEAR. What's that?
KENT. Authority."

IF before classifying the visible manifestations of the English character one inquires the special grounds of certain traits—its robustness, its originality, its inconsistency—one's first thought is that England is an island, and that this explains everything. But that the English should be at once in love with liberty and docile to law; profoundly reverent in religious matters, and constantly remodelling them to their own tastes; excessively proud in public and humble in private; egotistical, yet capable of silent acts of magnificent devotion; keen psychologists, yet little able to perceive the motives of others; gifted with both splendid poetic imagination and keen practical sense—is it really sufficient to be surrounded by water to realize so complex a type? Do the Corsicans and Sardinians resemble the English?

Certainly the isolation of this "precious stone set in the silver sea" is not quite irrelevant to the mental

conformation of the English; but does it play therein the only or even the foremost part ? Undoubtedly the influences exercised by the successive invaders of Great Britain must be taken into account to begin with. And first the Romans. Though they stayed some three centuries they did not here as much as elsewhere fix the stamp of their characteristically precise and constructive mental processes. The barbarians resisted the sudden intrusion of a human type so clearly defined, of a physical habit and aims so different from their own. They resisted in turn all the transient invaders of the island; before the Saxons nothing had really penetrated the depth of the primitive soil. But these last at once began to send down as it were roots, to go deep into the heart of the land, and lay there the foundations of the English character. They absorbed all they touched. They absorbed the pirates, their redoubtable aggressors, and the Normans, their masters. The men who in 1215 wrenched the Great Charter from King John were no longer the same race as those who in 1066 followed Duke William. The Saxons had done their work !

The base of the English character is undoubtedly Germanic. And there are certainly some analogies easy to discover, of which we have all heard more than enough, between the English we know and the Germans of Tacitus. But the modern German character has the same base—and do the Germans resemble the English much more than the Corsicans do ? I venture to think not. From the same point of departure the two peoples have taken widely

different paths. Shall we not admit, then, the intervention of some local force by which the absorbing and transforming Saxons were themselves transformed? For by virtue of some special force they have become a race which seems to have invented its own virtues and its own defects—and its own peculiar quality of will-power—with one end in view: the evolution of an inimitable personality and a power unequalled by any other, in any other epoch.

What was this special force? Possibly the climate. Yes, I should say a certain peculiarity of the English climate.

It is generally agreed that the English developed a taste for travel and luxury—and the energy necessary to procure these—because the moist cold of their climate forced them to be always warmly clothed, well fed, and well lodged. Yet regions as cold as England have developed tastes and energies quite diverse from theirs. Besides, if a rude and harsh climate were indispensable to produce a rich, dominant, and aggressive nation, we should never have heard of Macedonia, the Roman Empire, the Venetian Republic—nor plenty of other things!

Strong influences as they are, the purely physical necessities imposed upon a people by the circumstances of their development cannot of themselves alone determine the national character. In any country whatsoever, I believe, human beings owe their development to two instincts, which are, one wholly, the other in part, spiritual instincts: fear and curiosity.

Fear is the supreme manifestation of the desire to live—a purely physiological safeguard employed by the instinct of self-preservation. Every living being fears suffering and death; but this kind of fear is secondary to the one I mean. It can only be called into being by experience: in order to fear death, man must suffer, see death and remember it. He must recognize, so to speak, the symptoms of pain and loss, by their calling up images of pain and loss suffered before, and go through a series of associations the result of which is this secondary kind of fear, appropriate to the danger and created by it. This fear is logical, an acquisition of the intelligence.

The other kind is the true fear. The presence of danger is not necessary to produce it. It is always there. It haunts the most rudimentary brains. Animals in a state of nature, without knowledge of suffering or death, know it. It was man's earliest sensation. It fashioned his soul. It was the spur that made him invent religion. It unites all men, lying, like the bond of a secret order, beneath all differences.

This fear is debilitating. Hence it has a necessary reaction—curiosity. The weak living creature, fearing too much to submit passively to his fate, turns upon it. The reaction, which is curiosity, leads him to the conquest of the unknown. With rash and trembling hand he lays hold upon the mysteries, to command and to conquer. Fear unites men; what differentiates them is the particular form taken by their curiosity. Whatever first rouses

the curiosity of a people gives that people its character.

It may be that the English are what they are partly because they live on an island, where it is chilly; and partly because the Saxons dominated Great Britain. But most of all it is because, even on the finest days, there is fog in England.

A dry atmosphere, in which distant objects look near and distinct, induces physical laziness. What is the good of getting closer to anything when you can see it very well from where you are? And since people are never perturbed by things too evident to be misunderstood, the absence of uncertainty begets the constitutional idler. Men moving in a scene perpetually bathed in abundant, endless limpidity, develop a degree of independence of their surroundings. The distant view is devoid of mystery for them, therefore they may assume toward it at will a mood of detachment. It cannot dominate or possess them. Their curiosity employs itself instead upon the immediate, the inherently mysterious, the secrets of being. The passions become the great affair of life. The power of keen thinking grows, and the art of conversation is born.

Again, one ceases, or rather one never begins, to give inner meaning to things whose outer shape is sufficiently pleasing. The exterior becomes the sole interest; the cult of form springs up, and form, constantly reasserting and insisting upon its own stark verity, awakens in man the itch for imitation. Art is born; and in its service the will of man is

employed and satisfied. Contact takes place readily, there is a facile interchange of life; men are quick to enjoy, to suffer, and to forget. They see so clearly! And to see is to comprehend, to comprehend is first to sympathize and then to love. They love everything. They love the clear sky, and the exquisite line of a marble cornice; they love crime that is picturesque and virtue that is dramatic; they love the slow curve of an insect's flight. They have time to love, being pressed neither by ambition nor by lust of ownership. What is it if not possession—this power to see objects in their completeness and in all the refinement of detail? Why crave the doubtful illusory joy of material possession? Why struggle, why compel circumstance, where one reigns without lifting a finger, where the eager nerves suck pleasure from the least sensation, where every outward form is a rich feast to the eye, where space itself comes close and yields itself without reserve?

The result of this abounding clarity is a race more inventive than sincere—a race of facile artists and talkers, a folk instinct with gaiety and charm—the people of the South.

In a misty air the mind is urged on by the unseen. The horizon always hides something, teasing the curiosity and provoking disquiet. How can you gaze with absent familiarity on a scene that is for ever changing, for ever putting off its veil only to put on a fresh one, never discovering any of its mystery except straightway to add to it?

In a fog one cannot feel complete solitude or

perfect security or utter freedom. The merest delicate blue mist may hide the end of the street; straightway you forget everything in view to speculate upon what may be there unseen. The invisible calls—it seems to wait. What lurks behind the mist? If you penetrate it will you have the same prospect as before or something quite different? Does danger threaten or fortune wait, there behind the mist? The desire to find out becomes an obsession. You go to see—you must. Thus your path is determined by the necessity of seeing farther.

The enigma constantly proposed by the fog, in placing at a distance the object of his interest, forces man to bestir himself in order to appease his curiosity. But this motion toward knowledge differs in kind from movements made to satisfy the appetite or gratify material desires. It is motion expressive of pride and liberty. Walking, you feel that you conquer the soil you tread, and taste the exultation born of a powerful and precise consciousness of physical being; for no other exercise can so fix one's attention upon the strains, the balances, and the resistances of the body. Now this habit of walking for the satisfaction of a mental inquiry brings into close association two things: the consciousness of one's body and the sentiment of hope which underlies curiosity. Whereas habitual inactivity fosters the idea that the mind exists for itself alone, muscular action asserts the interdependence of body and mind. Gradually the humble idea of muscular activity gains in importance. Gradually your conception of the *ego* comes to mean

body first and mind afterwards. You conceive of the *ego* as always in action, the will immediately manifested as deed. Last stage of all, the action ultimately overtakes the thought; that is to say, the brain finds that it thinks most readily when the muscles are in action or about to act; so that movement finally becomes a necessary prelude to thought, and a distinct type of character is the result—the man of action, of muscle.

The English are men of muscle, as everybody knows. But everybody is of opinion that the strength and weakness of the type are derived from sports, roast beef, and cold baths. This is wrong. The beef, the baths, and the athletic prowess are mere concomitants of the muscular temperament; suitable tastes for a man of action to possess but not to be possessed by. His temperament comes, as I have shown, from always having wanted to see farther. It is much less a matter of superlative muscles than of his attitude toward whatever muscles he has. And most of all it is a matter of his having become conscious of his own body first and the universe afterwards, and of his taking a great and continuous pleasure therein.

Some people are full of open windows, through which a host of new impressions rush in and possess the nerve centres with jostling profusion. They are full of open doors, too, out of which they are for ever launching to mingle with the outer world, to embrace, to dissolve, to lose themselves. But the man of muscle is a closed house.

Every Englishman is that closed house—a perpetual surprise to people of our type, who always run out to greet the passer-by and take an interest in what goes on at the neighbours'. It is hard for us to understand people who are shut up in a fortress without exit or entrance; but what we could see if we looked are the marks of a temperament bred from the English mist and fixed in its vigorous traits by the hand of time. We should perceive admirable logic in their seeming paradoxes, and give them, besides our unstinted admiration, a meed of the sympathy they so little seem to ask.

Muscular effort is habitual to all Englishmen. Those who are not themselves athletic participate in the feats of others, and become so by proxy or an act of the imagination—which is the same thing. Moreover, they regard muscular effort as being almost if not quite on the same plane as efforts of a moral order. The glorious victories of brawn—and the no less glorious defeats—hold in their affections a larger place than the achievements of brain; and both orders of achievement they think of as due to the same virtues, endurance and self-mastery—two excellent and typically muscular endowments.

Let an Englishman desire something—the desire presents itself as an invitation to a physical struggle, and his arms and legs grow tense as at the moment of conflict. He need not be particularly athletic, he need only habitually associate the two ideas of muscular prowess and human dignity—in other words, he need only be an Englishman! The mo-

ment he wills anything, his muscles will take command of the enterprise and prefigure its success, for in health the muscles are always optimistic. The Englishman of courage does not stop to look ahead or weigh chances. He sees his end—and makes for it. Afterwards he may perceive the risks involved, but then it is too late; for his will once flung cannot return upon itself. Moreover, it is immediately fortified by the sensation of his own activity, which induces a pleasure so lively as to suppress all reasonable ground of apprehension and even to blur the end he had in view. The Englishman would like us to believe he is obstinate on principle. He is in fact only so for the pleasure of it.

He has regard neither for the interests of his neighbours nor for the cost to himself, nor for the justice of his cause. His act is based not upon cool abstractions, but upon perceptions which are conveyed to him by his own muscles, and as such totally impervious to reason, without an opening for doubt—unlike those convictions which are the result of a mental process. The Englishman does not will with his heart, for his heart might fail him. He does not will with his mind, for the mind must be open to argument. He wills with his invincible muscles. They are his citadel, impregnable to doubt. Of course, this means he has little critical sense. If he had, he might occasionally relinquish a plan once undertaken—and he never does.

The English, so fond of "home," are the greatest travellers in Europe. They adapt themselves with

the utmost ease to strange countries and casual accommodation. Change is their sovereign remedy —their cure-all for illness, disappointment, misplaced affection, and spleen. Directly they leave home things begin to look better—perhaps what they so love in their home is the possibility of leaving it. Perhaps home is to them less a place than an idea. We all know what an Englishman's home looks like: that rose- and ivy-clad abode which he so freely lets furnished to utter strangers, all full of photographs of his dearest friends, small intimate knick-knacks and personal souvenirs of joys and sorrows. Not thus do I picture to myself the Englishman's true home, that dwelling without access where he has his being; which he carries with him over the sea and into the desert, to the Swiss châlet and the palace on the Grand Canal. The veritable home of the Englishman is his own impregnable soul. Within that acropolis he plays out a drama of the strangest, most unbelievable intensity, glimpses of which we sometimes catch in certain English books—books full of a passion almost incredible in this cold and impassive folk.

The influence of this habitual reserve upon the English character is two-fold: it has made Englishmen less apt in swift understanding and sympathy for others; and it has made them psychologists. Taine was right when he said that psychology was indigenous in England.

Knowledge of the human soul is not arrived at by conning its deceptive outer manifestations. There is a kind of historian who pursues this empty

method, being meticulously exact to marshal all the facts, to tell just what people looked like and just what they said. We are all familiar with the dry-as-dust result. The poor man has scrupulously copied the mask and taken note of the untruths. His very "facts" lie, for he has not told the most important thing about them—their significance. He will cite you Othello as a detestable assassin—and Othello was no assassin but a lover. The historian gets very close to his facts—why does he not look within himself a little instead? Because he is too curious, too acute, too alive to outer sensations.

The English are neither lively nor curious; and they are on intimate terms with their souls. So far from being given to speculation upon the motives and intentions of the passer-by, they sometimes fail to notice him at all. Certainly the Brontë sisters did not draw the fiery substance of their art from contemplating the villagers about them. They drew it from the bottom of their own souls. We all have in us that depth where time accumulates his types, saints and rascals, fiends and holy maids; only we do not see them, moving there in the shadow, because most of us let our attention be distracted by the outer din, and dissipated on a thousand wandering winds. Then it is, that for lack of better material, we try to reproduce the silhouette of a lady we knew, or tell the story of a friend of ours. But not in this way is humanity ever enriched by the creation of one of those imperishable figures, more living than life itself.

The English, slow to receive impressions, little

careful to sound the depth of other hearts, not given to squander their power upon incident, or to evaporate in sparkling chatter, have given us a vast number of immortals. "The English," Carlyle said, "are a dumb people," and adds that it brings them in touch with mysteries. He was right.

Speech is deceitful; so are looks. Truth is a mystery. It lives in the citadel.

The pride of the Englishman is not collective, but individual. That of the German, for instance, is collective—he is well endowed with what Nietzsche called "Herdeninstinkt." He feels himself the greater for belonging to a great race. But the Englishman conceives that he, and what he stands for, add to the greatness of his country. His own individuality is too strong to merge in the vague immensity of the national being. The German wants to see himself represented by a glorious Fatherland; the Englishman feels that in his own person and single-handed he represents his country everywhere. Wherever Brown or Robinson goes, England *is* Brown or Robinson, for the time being. But the ideal of Meier is that when one thinks of Germany the name of Meier stands out.

German pride is a relative affair. It is timid, and by reason it tends to become coarsely aggressive. The Englishman never compares himself with others. Habitually self-reliant and self-controlled, used to command, his pride is of the most absolute kind, born of a sense of perfect domination in a narrow field. For his kingdom is himself, and he is for ever

conscious of himself and his kingship—and to be sure Kings never compare themselves with other people!

Despite this magnificent pride, the English are unrivalled snobs. Their very greatest in mental and moral stature yield excessive deference to rank, even rank newly acquired or possessed by mediocrity. It seems a contradiction—but it is not.

I have read somewhere that people used to apply to poor mortals unblessed with aristocratic lineage the phrase, "He is not born." Is the expression still current, I wonder? Of course it did not mean that the person's mother had not brought him into the world in the usual way; but simply that to the users of the phrase he had less importance, and thus less reality, than people of their own rank. For them this poor wretch who was "not born" had only half a life. The injury they did him was palpable; for surely the great business of life is to believe in your existence and make others believe in it—as many others as possible, and in the greatest possible degree. The very root of pride is the belief in one's power to prove that one is; and the struggle for existence leads us to negative this power in others. Conscious intellectual pride must of its nature be always on the defensive—the opinions of others are indispensable to it, if only for the sake of defying them. To relinquish its claims is to depreciate its own value; to forget itself for a moment is to be lost. It could not inhabit the same soul with snobbishness—anywhere but in England. But English pride

can afford to dispense with safeguards and confirmations. The Englishman need not prove his reality to others—he is too sure of it himself, being uninterruptedly conscious of his own body. He never thinks of being afraid to lower himself by deference to an unworthy object; the ground of his pride being a very vivid and precise consciousness of himself, it cannot be vitiated by any opinion he may hold of others. His pride, in short, like his will, is inviolable, by reason that it resides not in his mind but in his muscles. He can religiously adore an aristocracy which in its turn religiously adores money, but his pride remains intact—he merely permits himself to be a snob!

He is a snob quite simply, without qualifications and without shame; also without the smothered mockery and biting contempt which alleviate the poignancy of French snobbishness. The French snob, though he has always an aching after a social level higher than his own, acquiesces, albeit with impatience, in the laws of social inequality. The Englishman never does—or rather, he never feels them as final, and in England they are not. English nobility, constantly recruited from the ranks of the successful commoners—it is in fact the usual reward of the latter—or from the men who have rendered public service, cannot have that isolated and inaccessible loftiness pertaining to it where it is not thus continually renewed. English nobility is convertible—like everything else that is organic. Its sons return to the people, and the people return it their sons. It is not an irritating abstraction, but a

concrete and graspable good—when they do homage to it they are paying their respects to something they may all one day become.

All this is why the Englishman can preserve or even enhance his self-respect together with his snobbery. After the Battle of Poitiers the Black Prince refused to sup with the captive King of France, "because he said he was not sufficient to sit at the table with so great a Prince as the King was." He served his captive on his knees. We may be sure the Black Prince did not humble himself in the least by this act, nor abate a jot of his great pride. The English easily go on their knees to rank and even to fortune, because they can so easily get up again. With them it is always the night of Poitiers—or the day before.

You have seen, in a railway station, an hotel, a picture gallery, a group of Frenchmen—or Germans or Italians—who are strangers to each other. Their bearing, their garments, show that they belong to different surroundings and possess varying educations, tastes, and interests. Yet many similarities betray their kinship. With much to diversify them, they are still united, their disparity has a family cast, and you feel that they would react in the same way to the same stimulus. They exchange looks of pleasure or displeasure which reveal the secret bond. Their souls wear a uniform of which only the decorations vary.

In an English drawing-room you see people united by blood, affection, friendship, tastes, and habits,

and they have an indescribable air of detachment. Though they hold the same opinions and represent the same culture, yet they are strangers. Their dissimilarities are not bridged even by the allusions and pleasantries current in the circle. Some of them have faces like masks; they look not much more like each other than they do like the Indian Prince who sometimes ornaments the gathering, with his narrow, lacquered eyes, his subtle, tea-coloured visage, and his beautiful sword with the emerald-studded sheath. Every Englishman is an island; between him and others spreads like an ocean his personal originality.

True, the English have a superstitious respect for conventions. Their spirits love as well to stay in one place as their bodies do to roam. To them the antiquity of a thing does not at all predicate its disuse; on the contrary things only appear good to them when endorsed by time, and they are prone to turn into a religion everything that has endured. In no other country does one talk so many commonplaces; in no other does one so glibly give utterance to received ideas without verifying them. Nowhere else does one so burn to be usual, not to draw attention to oneself. Do not these seem to be the very methods likely to produce perfect uniformity in the national type? Well, in despite of, or thanks to, these methods, all the English from first to last, be they clever or dull, vulgar or cultured, honest or the opposite, are originals.

Every nation must have its own special type of dulness—French, Germans, Turks, Chinese, and all.

Not so the English. There are stupid English, but there is no English stupidity. Each of them is what he is in his own way. Take any subject—patriotism, morals, religion—this strange people will not conceive of it as an abstraction of universal application, on which they should all think alike and come to the same conclusion. Each of them must add here and subtract there, and cut himself out a religion, a system of morals, a code of patriotism, to suit himself and himself alone.

They take no pains to explain this to you. It may be that they themselves are imperfectly aware of it. They are immensely deferential to the policeman, so perhaps they are not conscious of the existence in them of an instinct of rebellion, always standing ready to rise against any law, however good, that appears to limit their right of being themselves.

It is their originality that makes them amuse themselves so sadly—as they always do except on occasion of a game of football or cricket, or other sport. Then they are hugely entertained, and do not hesitate to show it. But no other occasion has the power to create in them a collective soul, such as is so easily felt in a French theatre, and is born wherever three Italians together witness any incident, however slight. But the English, when they see a tragedy or a comedy, hear an orator or an opera, or look at views or paintings, are cautious about venturing outside themselves. They have not that sense of your neighbour's pleasure meeting and augmenting your own. The grounds of their

enjoyment are too personal to be communicated. They are still and look inattentive—we should think them bored, we who never taste joy but to share it. No, they are only enjoying themselves, by themselves.

They attach a moral value to impassiveness, to inexpressiveness, to self-effacement, considering them indicative of breeding and proper feeling. This is not arrogance or hypocrisy, but prudence; for if every one of them—each so different from the others—once gave free rein to his idiosyncrasies, what incalculable disorder would result! This they guard against.

Their originality, which more than anything else distinguishes the English type, does not come from intelligence. They are not very intelligent—taken in the mass—in the usual sense of the word. They comprehend slowly and with difficulty. Favourable difficulty, happy slowness, for they are a protection against influences which would make of the English something quite different from what they are!

The gift of keen perceptions lays its possessor open to outward influences. He is readily obsessed by what he sees in fashions and ideas, good and bad. The Englishman does not run this risk. He is not easily moved to an encounter, not armed with antennæ for the detection of others' delicate and subtle motives; not possessed of suppleness to change nor the quick sympathy for others that draws us continually out of our sphere. What is foreign interests him too little for an objective scrutiny. If people or things become a motive to him, or if

they stand in his way, then he takes leisurely cognizance and adjusts his conduct to the situation. But doing so does not alter his mental configuration —not by the deflection of a line or the widening of a single angle. He will take the trouble to comprehend, if that be necessary to determine his course, but never for the purpose of acquiring ideas which might upset his notion of himself or the universe.

Certain vivacious qualities having nothing in common with originality are often mistaken for it by staid non-possessors. Dislike of restraint, the affectation of an odd habit, fondness for playing a part, even some forms of mania—originality is none of all these. Observe the people of whom it is said they "do nothing like anyone else." You will commonly find them of an acute sensibility. Their minds are easy prey to suggestion; imitative to the last degree, they conceive themselves to be eccentric. Their very poses are copies. Their facility tempts them to make types of themselves, and what physiognomy they originally had they thus obliterate. Without an audience they become wholly amorphous. They have no core of consciousness.

The Englishman has. Against a first attack it is nearly always proof; and few innovations can actually succeed in being acknowledged by it, even on repeated effort.

I would not deny that the Englishman takes on strange fashions, and will have many, even doubtful, infatuations; but these remain brief and extraneous in a manner to amaze us superficial French. His

distaste for reflection explains his fickleness. He will provisionally select this and that as goods, until time has saved him the effort of pronouncing mentally upon his choice and tested their quality for him by slow, inevitable processes. When at length it comes home to him that his hero has clay feet or his coat an inept design, he will disembarrass himself of either with calm completeness, and no infinitesimal part of himself goes with that he puts away. He is never committed to his tastes as we are. His enthusiasms are produced outside of himself—somewhere, anywhere else. His out-of-character admirations, his docile acceptance of the latest mode in art or morals, will leave on him no mark. Like Panurge's sheep, he may jump into the sea with the rest of the flock; but he will remain himself throughout.

He is continuously protected by his originality from acting a part. The constitutional play-actor feels the world looking at him, the Englishman does not. The former must intuitively know the temper and tastes of his public, in order to hold up before it the mirror in which it will be pleased to see itself. Of such an attitude the Englishman is incapable. To please other people is a thought remote from him.

His fondness for converting his deficiencies into moral laws is illustrated by the manner in which he makes a virtue of his own slow perceptions. That exquisite and isolating discretion of which he is master is with him a profound obligation; but it is none the less a flower of his mental indolence.

Not caring to observe others, he has established the principle that curiosity, or even very lively interest, is vulgar. Once for all, let no one very much concern himself with anyone else, he seems to say. From this flows the result that when a moment for action comes he is unhampered by the thought of present spectators and judges. He does not know they exist.

It is quite possible for an Englishman to be sensitive to criticism that busies itself unfavourably with his actions after he has committed them. But as an abstraction, public opinion will always remain a stranger to his thoughts—unless, indeed, some nervous abnormality has weakened his muscular morals, and to that extent diluted the essence of his Englishness.

So it comes that the most distinguished Frenchman can hardly be as original, from head to foot, as the most inconsiderable Englishman; for the former, even in yielding himself to the strongest impulse, must always pause to compare and foresee. He will never take the first step toward the attainment of his end without having already perceived the thousand consequences of the last one. And most assuredly he will think what will be said about it! The force of instinct in him is not infrequently annulled by the thought of criticism; and so strong is his consciousness of his critics that some of their spirit seems to flow temporarily into his. He needs approbation, for he has need of love. He is by nature so communicative that his inner personality streams richly into his outward bearing, and this

again reacts within him—so that all he says and does, even to sheer insincerities and acts his will would disclaim, modifies his own character, so much a part of him does it immediately become. Socially gifted, graceful in giving and receiving, what he really dreads is the heart-dividing power of censure and ridicule. That fear of ridicule, as Stendhal has triumphantly demonstrated, is what makes pure originality so rare among us. There is good reason for the power it wields; for in France we have a public; the French taste their dearest pleasure in mutual criticism, and the ridiculous excites in them a murderous scorn.

The English have a wonderful sense of the ridiculous. They have raised to it more than one imperishable monument: shallow old Polonius, adorable Pickwick of the pure and beautiful childlike heart—both of them treated with a caressing mildness, as indeed are generally the many buffoons of English literature. And all the worst cases benefit by ridicule. The odious Pecksniff, for example, instead of being, as he might so easily be, intolerable to us, becomes by his absurdity almost pleasing. The English do not despise the ridiculous. They like and admire it. And they are right. For them it is the expression of a profound and unconscious originality. It reveals the essential independence of a type of human beings who, failing to perceive cruel possibilities, display a simple optimism in situations whose significance—whose vital rhythm, as it were—they have not caught, and so follow their own and move out of time. This is the source

of their awkwardness, their ludicrous blunders, their lack of the sense of proportion. And who could deny that there is something touching, as well as ridiculous, a sort of simple dignity, about them all, beyond the power of laughter to destroy ?

With us the ridiculous could scarcely ever be as sincere and ingenuous as this. Its chief material is some inflated pretension, whose own self-mistrust makes it act out of bravado and strike false notes; whose real lack of confidence is only imperfectly masked by a bold front; which never possesses the calm of certainty. In France, where one can feel the shade of meaning conveyed by a tone, and instantly decipher the mystery of a glance, the ridiculous could hardly spring from an innocent lack of comprehension, a superfluity of confidence, or from absent forgetfulness of public opinion. Rather it must come from an itch to appear other than what one is—a pitiable ambition, embittered by the disturbing thought that you may be found out.

In England, the ridiculous—composed of equal parts of unconsciousness that a public exists or has an attitude toward one, and of stubborn determination to be oneself even on occasions when it would be better to be otherwise—is an affirmation of personal liberty. And the tender, gently rallying attitude he assumes toward the ridiculous is a most intelligible and legitimate manifestation of the admirable pride of the Englishman.

Both as individuals and collectively, the English often appear to contradict themselves, in a manner superbly, almost insultingly, calm. The very good reason for their phlegm is that the inconsistency is perceived by others, not by themselves. They have flung themselves into action, because action pleases and thought bores them. If, subsequently, the action appears ill-advised, they can cancel it; whereas it is idle to talk of cancelling an opinion where none has been formed. The Englishman, following the inexorable logic of his muscles, has not contradicted—he has, in fact, demonstrated himself.

It follows naturally upon their temperament that all classes of effort should have for the English a peculiar and chivalrous appeal. Yet the spectacle of endurance calls out their even more especial sympathy—it is more in their line than the furious spurt of action which rouses the enthusiasm of the Latins. And they surrender utterly to a manifestation of indomitable will-power.

"They call'd us for our fierceness English dogs," says Talbot; and Cornelius de Witt cried: "One may kill them, but not conquer them!" That fierceness is the satisfaction of a physical need converted by them into a moral one; and they never relax it except in the presence of its peer. But then the result is certain. By dint of persistence in a bad cause they convince themselves of its righteousness —such and so great is their belief in the sanction of the immutable will.

They respect specialists, of whatever sort, since specialization is in effect just the persistence of effort in a single direction. But I seem to discern in them no preference for one object over another, for their concentrated and unremitted effort. The great thing is the effort—the passion to persist, the will to endure. Whether one applies oneself to exegesis or the bicycle is the same in the eyes of God —and in theirs.

One cause, one law, and one point of departure must exist for all these varied mental traits. On the day of a stormy session Pitt greeted a friend while remaining seated, saying that if he were once on his legs he could not stop himself from addressing the House. The simple remark holds all the temper of the race, and its history. That man, so passionately English, could control himself when seated and inactive. But standing, in that attitude of his ancestors when they marched toward the dim, mist-veiled horizon, their very spirit, violent and lustful of domination, would mount in him and possess him. The bruit of their heroic muscles would shake the inmost citadel of the man—they would take the command, and he would obey!

CHAPTER III

THEIR INSENSIBILITY

"Things past redress are now with me past care."
Richard II.

THE well-bred Englishman preserves a fine impassivity before tragedy, and presents to moral suffering a front of admirable composure. His condolences are couched in the form of religious commonplace or an appeal to self-respect—very rare with him is the gift of burning words that make the blood course faster and with cleansing power through the wound. He is like a man who sees an accident or a person injured, and, with the best intentions, does nothing, because he does not know the best thing to do. Or he is like a stern doctor of the moral law, who rigidly points out to the sufferer that his pain is all for the best, that others have suffered before now, and that if he thinks of his duty to himself it will soon bring him round. English people are charitable to excess; they spare neither money, care, time, nor their own interests to alleviate physical suffering; but they seem to fear contact with moral dolours. They are displeased, perhaps even a little disgusted, with the naked sight of sorrow.

Toward mourning their attitude is pagan. The softening centuries of Christian tears have flowed in vain upon their ideal; it remains that of the antique world. You remember the words of Plutarch to his wife on the death of their daughter, that tender little Timoxena who begged her nurse to give suck to other children and even to her dolls. More than once, from English lips, I have heard the echo of the good Greek's words: "Not only ought the chaste woman to remain incorrupt in Bacchanalian revels, but she ought to consider her self-control not a whit less necessary in the surges of sorrow and emotion of grief." He reminds the poor woman that on the day of their son's death she had already won general praise by receiving guests who found the house so well-ordered and herself so calm as to make them discredit the report of her loss. I suspect we should scarcely appreciate as well as the English the merits of so correct a bearing. Plutarch adds: "The insatiable desire for a passionate display of funeral grief, coming to a climax in dirges and beatings of the breast, is not less unseemly than intemperance in pleasure and is unreasonably forgiven only because pain and grief instead of delight are elements in the unseemly exhibition. For what is more unreasonable than to curtail excessive laughter or any other demonstration of joy, and to allow a free vent to copious lamentation and wailing that came from the same source?"

Any revelation of the troubled depths of painful emotion the English view with horror. Like Plu-

tarch, they find in abandoned grief a nervous satisfaction the same in kind as that of the Bacchanalian orgies, and as revolting to their sense of decency. They are not wholly wrong. Pleasure and pain spring from the same source; in their extremes all our emotions meet. Montaigne says: "La volupté même est douloureuse dans sa profondeur." And the converse of this painful truth is that utter abandonment to grief is in its essence sensual. For the maintenance of propriety and self-control the grief-stricken one needs to have clung to a modicum of will-power, which shall stand aloof from the feelings and check their indecorous vehemence. But is such disinterestedness possible to a heart invaded by woe? Rather is not the weakness of giving way to be readily pardoned as a touching betrayal of a capacity for deep feeling and strong passion? To the English it is a mark of sheer moral feebleness. They concede no beauty and accord no sympathy to the outward form of woe, let it wear all the heart-piercing loveliness it sometimes will; and they would no more cherish it than a malignant fever. The sight of it is always an "unseemly exhibition." They ignore it if possible. Nothing is more un-English than despair. To them it could never be the sign that a soul was rich in love, but only that it was poor in moral fibre. They believe that, as after an illness the healthiest tissues will soonest repair themselves, so after bereavement and pain the best-tempered souls will earliest recover their wonted poise.

We know how in the tortured hour of loss the mind will seize with the cruel avidity of grief upon the gruesome accompaniments of death. The English know that hour to shun it as perversion of the basest sort. And they are right—from their point of view. The Southerner, in whose mind thought leaps so swiftly to its ultimate conclusions, will easily whip his anguish into hideous visual images—or rather, they come without effort, not defiling his imagination, but giving it a more violent course and their turn partaking of its warmth of life. The Englishman does not thus perceive an infinite prolongation of what is before him. Only two things could conjure up for him the revolting images of death: morbid nerves, or the mind of a Shakespeare to revel with fierce sublimity in the charnel-house. Failing these, he would be obliged to bend his will-power toward the formation of diseased conceptions which to the Southerner are the mere foam of his swift-flowing imagination, but to the Englishman would be a slow poison wilfully self-administered. He is right to repel these images, for they would degrade him. "Nothing is more middle-class than a taste for funerals," a very cultured Englishwoman told me once. She and her countrywomen do not like to mention such things. The sight or even the thought of a dead body disgusts them a little. I hardly think they know the terrible tenderness that grips the vitals in the presence of the still form of a being once—and now even more—all your own; the passionate pity in which you enfold it, as though it were become a little helpless child; the vibration

of your very fibres, bound, as it were, to the cold flesh and powerless to give it life though they throb almost to bursting; the pitiless, desperate memory of words from the dead lips and looks from the eyes for ever shut; the rising up of your common past like a rushing wave as you stoop and kiss the white face—I think the English know nothing of all this, and I suspect they would not learn it at any price.

The story following was told me as a supreme case of English conjugal effection. A devotedly attached wife nursed her husband in a mortal illness. One evening he relapsed into a state of coma. The poor soul begged the physician to say that there was still hope, that her beloved would rally; but was told that he was dying. At once she left the room, was not present at the last moments of him who was her only happiness; and refused to see him in his coffin. She had adored her husband, and her grief was poignant and enduring; it was because she loved him that she turned away her head, as we do in order not to see some one we care for in a situation that belittles him. She cherished the memory of a man full of vigour, beauty, and happiness; and she prevented the intervention between herself and this memory of the something he was become—a thing unrelated to her, that stirred no dear associations—that strange and repulsive thing, a dead body.

The English disapprove of long mourning. I have

heard an Englishwoman speak with some annoyance of a young French girl who still wore mourning for her mother, dead the year before. The dead woman was her own dear friend, and she had no wish that the little one should forget her; but she thought the black garments an affectation unworthy of the sacred memory of the dead, and saw a sort of unseemliness in a practice calculated to draw attention upon a private loss. It is not that the English would forbid the cherishing of grief, but only the show of it; they would have you speak little of it, and not let it change your life, for so it would be

> "A fault to Heaven,
> A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
> To reason most absurd."

If his father had not been so villainously slain, the English public would very likely reprobate the language of Hamlet in that arraignment of his mother for remarrying:

> "Or ere the shoes were old
> With which she follow'd my poor father's body."

For, except for the deplorable circumstances attendant upon her second marriage, and her notorious immorality, the Queen of Denmark had simply conformed—with after all but little exaggeration—to the British idea of mourning.

With all this there exist special cases to be mentioned, where the English show themselves vulnerable to grief, and even incapable of consolation; but I must first give some examples of their wonderful

power to shake off sorrow as an attack both ugly and degrading.

A young man driving a motor-car ran over and killed his wife, at an unexpected turn of the road. She was charming, and he adored her. Six months later he took another wife, equally charming and equally adored. The happy marriage was described to a Frenchman, who asked how such a thing was possible. His question put everybody present into a baffled frame of mind, as when, in an argument, you fail, after repeated trial, to make the other person understand what you mean. How such an affection and such a catastrophe could be with such ease forgotten was incomprehensible to the Frenchman, while the English could not comprehend his lack of comprehension.

A vivacious society woman, fond of sport, whose baby had died two weeks before, spoke of the child with tranquil affection, and then queried: "Would it be the thing for me to go to Ascot?" She was told that it would be quite proper.

My last example of the resistance of the muscular temperament to the stroke of bereavement is afforded by the story of a delightful seventeenth-century Puritan, wife of Colonel Hutchinson. He first fell in love with the mere report of her learning and discretion, but turned passionate as well upon a sight of her. She knew Latin and had a wonderful figure. Their marriage was of the perfect English type, which does not change with time to callous familiarity, but grows higher and purer with mutual respect and forethought, each partner living but to

please and to adore the other. Such a marriage one seldom sees in our country, where the national moralist says: "S'il est de bons mariages, il n'en est pas de délicieux." The Hutchinsons' marriage was "délicieux." The Colonel, a Governor of Nottingham, and later, in 1646, a Member of Parliament, had an honourable minor part in the Rebellion, and shared in the trial and condemnation of Charles I.—the most important and not the most fortunate act of his career.

After the Restoration he was left in peace for three years. Then they remembered him and put him in prison. His wife begged in vain to be confined with him, but they let her see him every day. Their lamentable case only increased the tenderness of the pair; one can guess the prodigies of affection of which Mrs. Hutchinson was capable. Alas, the captive fell gravely ill, and visibly approached his end; while at this crisis the wife had to leave him to attend to some business on their estate at Owthorpe. What anguish, what agonizing presentiments one endures with her at the thought of the parting, what tortured endeavours to conceal them from the sufferer! He gave her written directions about work in the gardens; whereat, weeping, she said, in a surprise stripped of pretence: "You give orders as if you expected never to see Owthorpe again!" Words like these, to a dear and dying prisoner, overwhelm with astonishment my light French soul. Verily, between the Hutchinsons there lay no shadow of restraint or subterfuge!

The husband died during her absence. The friend who attended his death-bed feared the blow would crush the adoring wife; he little guessed her fortitude. The better to support her grief she presently began to write a memoir of him. Speaking of her married life, she says: "I shall pass by all the little amorous relations, which, if I should take the pains to relate, would make a true picture of a more handsome management of love than the best romances describe; but these are to be forgotten as the vanities of youth, not worthy of mention among the greater transactions of his life." And this is her language in respect to his misfortune and death: "They who dote on mortal excellences, when by the inevitable fate of all things frail their adored idols are taken from them, may let loose the winds of passion to bring in a flood of sorrow, whose ebbing tides carry away the dear memory of what they have lost. . . . But I that am under a command not to grieve at the common rate of desolate women, while I am studying which way to moderate my woe, and if it were possible to augment my love, can for the present find out none more just to your dear father than the preservation of his memory."

Here was an heroic soul! But her book is in fact much more than an austere monograph. The brave widow honoured as she should the memory of her dead; but she honoured, too, and omitted not to mention—with due Puritan reserve such as even heightens the value of the evidence—his personal charm, his physical beauty, his natively strong and

rarely-cultured mind, his lofty virtue, the elevation of his soul. And as though resolved to discipline her grief by a literary exercise and purge it of any remaining unworthiness, she bravely and explicitly recounts his varied excellences; more, she purposely distracts her sorrow with occupation, and carries out a series of descriptive portraits of the Protector's family and all the great figures of the Revolution, drawn with much penetration and some acerbity. Sorrow in no degree dulled her memory, blunted her prejudices, or mellowed her criticism. We may well be grateful that this indomitable being subdued her natural anguish and did not yield to despair, but sagely sought consolation in her inkstand. Mrs. Hutchinson was a clever Englishwoman.

None of my cases prove that the English do not feel. But they show that their sensibilities must come into play in a different field.

Blows from the hand of death they support with splendid energy; not so the blows of life, which they meet with neither the same serenity nor the same healthy impatience of suffering. Always, of course, they are more composed than other races; they are in most cases like Horatio, who was, we know, "as one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing." But their pangs of thwarted ambition or passion they now and then betray; they recover from these less promptly than from their regret for the dead—it even happens sometimes that they do not recover from them at all.

I imagine—but not I nor anyone else would dare affirm—that the English who die, as the phrase is, of a broken heart, are forsaken maidens and betrayed lovers, rather than widows and widowers. I imagine further—Heaven pardon my presumption!—that the English are not so quick to marry after a chagrin in love as after the death of a husband or wife, however beloved. Directly the loss is seen to be irretrievable, they guard against its affecting them vitally by successful efforts to divert and occupy their minds. They combat less effectively the torments of a misplaced affection or the vexation of defeat. A shock of either kind sets up in them—even more readily than in a less vigorous people—a process of self-poisoning, and results in a nervous collapse or even in alcoholism.

Either such wounds are not so easily scarred over as the others, or possibly the treatment applied is less heroic. The English appear—though they would never confess to it—to bear them with a certain complaisance, not too eager for a cure. The bitter despair of hope betrayed finds more tolerance than does persistent mourning for the dead—there is not precisely approval of it, but yet an eye to the mitigating circumstances. To give up life because someone you love has left it shows a lack of reason and dignity. It is of course absurd to become anæmia or take to drink because someone you love has left you—but, after all, how touching, how almost excusable!

This seeming indifference and those secret frenzies, this easy consolation and that mortal grief; all the

smothered passions, the dumb jealousies, the incredible inward upheaval of vain desires and baffled hopes—every agitation and every restraint, bases itself upon the rock foundation of the English character, which is a profound respect for life itself and a hatred for everything that denies, belittles, or subtracts from it. The English lady who advised the French girl to put off her mourning wished to turn her thoughts from death to life, to make her think not of her dead but of her living mother, and to teach her that the past is to be called up solely for the edification of the present and the future. The black garment meant, "Brother, think on thy end"—whereas she would say, "Put off your mourning, think upon life!"

She did not lack feeling, nor, I think, did those others—the wife who quitted her husband's death-bed, the bereaved mother who went to the races, the young widower who hastened to re-erect the wedded happiness he had himself involuntarily shattered, the charming Puritan who turned critic as an antidote to sorrow. Neither poverty of emotion nor obedience to a stoical philosophy prompted their disconcerting forgetfulness. All moral systems are constructed after the fact—they but express, not shape, inescapable tendencies. No, the English forget because their very natures forbid the retention of certain griefs with any persistent and horrible freshness of impression.

What is it we do after a bereavement that leaves us utterly desolate and alone, among the ruins of life, without even a foundation on which to build

anew ? Why, we try to reconstruct what we have lost—the image of the dead, his least gestures, his smallest change of expression, the most trifling play of his mind. We imagine that this is merely the fervid cultivation of a memory. In reality it is something else—the construction of a new personality, made half of the old and half of death, quite actual and distinct, shaped by love and regret out of the past and the present. This offspring of our grief is our own work, but we give it a separate existence, constantly present to us and constantly reanimating our pain. Thanks to this abstraction, which has become an entity, we are for ever living and re-living the tragedy of the separation and never closing the door upon our loss.

The English do none of this. That pre-eminent genius, Lord Bacon, once wrote to a friend, apropos of the discoveries of Galileo, that he wished Italian astronomers would dispense with their entertaining fables, and confine themselves more narrowly to matters perceptible to the senses. The abstract is not perceivable by the senses; and what is more of an abstraction than the dead, directly the thought of his actual body is no longer anything but a horror ? So the English do not create a new entity out of grief, the past and death. It does not stand always beckoning and calling to them. They believe in a future life where the loved dead, in some form not the subject of their present curiosity, will greet them when they themselves shall have likewise assumed the same form. Meanwhile, they say, let us live ! They will preserve the dear memory of him

who is no more, who never will be again; but his definite physical absence precludes the idea of ever mingling him with the phenomena of the present and of actual life. It is as though he were a relative gone to the other side of the world. You always love him, and some day you will go to see him there; but you do not see him now, because he is not present, and you do not keep on laying his place at table, for that would be rather overstrained and morbid.

Spiritism interests the English very much, and ghosts are rife among them; but these facts only afford proof of the English inability to cling to the departed beings who live only in the realm of thought. For their spectres all materialize themselves, according to Bacon's wish, in some manner or other perceivable to the senses. They are apparent to sight if not to touch, they wear special costumes, they rap on tables and write on slates—they act, in short, like the living; and in default of these practical evidences of their presence, one lets the dead wait patiently in the future and gives them no chance to weigh down the present.

They no longer exist. So you cannot help them, though you waste away of mere despair, though you refrain from Ascot week, though you go into a decline or give yourself up to dissipation. Therefore you attend the races, you write books, you take a second wife. That abstraction conjured into being by the yearning memory of other races would be pained by such summary oblivion—human egoism

still glows in its breast and craves the meed of tears, like those Homeric shades who would drink blood to bring them back the memory of the sun, the conflict, and the joy of life. The English dead know better what is due to them and others. When they return it is to add a last grace of the picturesque to some ancient castle, or to negotiate in the matter of a family secret; and they show themselves on these occasions to all alike.

Death is for the English the one irreparable fact. In this character it forbids their grief to prolong itself beyond reasonable limits. Their will, baffled in one direction, recoils upon other objects of employment; their need of action saves them from the contemplation of the unalterable. Death is not to be conquered by attack, and despair over his victory leads nowhere. He can wring the English heart; but the English physique soon grows indifferent to him.

Their instinct to " do something " on every occasion truly instructs them that sorrow is a heaven-sent lesson; that its meaning once taken, sorrow itself is no longer profitable, and should be dismissed without undue delay. The God of the English discourages inert repining. He punishes in order to teach, and his chastisement should make one happier than before. Having kissed the rod, they return strengthened to life; assuming from long habit an attitude of serene and even joyous resignation to the blows of fate.

" What cannot be preserv'd when fortune takes,
Patience her injury a mockery makes.
The robb'd that smiles steals something from the thief:
He robs himself that spends a bootless grief."

It is easy to explain the lesser fortitude of the Englishman under sufferings not caused by actual bereavement. Death he cannot conquer, so he flees from him. But all other troubles mingle with, or themselves produce in his mind, thoughts of struggle and victory. What actually exists is conceivably to be won. If the woman he loves loves another, what then? Shall he uproot love out of his heart, when so long as he lives success is still a possibility? His judgment may not believe in the possibility, but his muscles and his will-power do. Passion persists because he can still " do something " to gain his end—no matter what. He cherishes his despair because to give it up would be to relinquish his purpose—or rather, what he cherishes is hope, supported by which he can endure the gnawing evil of his disappointment. The English are unsurpassed *hopers*—hoping is the chief and not the least dangerous of their sports.

So they exercise mutual forbearance in all cases of sentimental regrets, and hesitate to condemn them as utterly futile, like mourning for the dead. They are, in fact, never completely convinced of their futility; for life has taught them that perseverance, even in the face of impossibility, will sometimes win the day. They persevere incredibly in all disappointments where life is the goal; bending

upon the struggle all that they have of silent energy and savage reserve, pruning their secret griefs as they do the yew-trees in their ornamental gardens. You have seen those yew-trees, cut in strange shapes of outlandish birds, and sedulously disciplined by the shears lest any unruly branch affect their fantastic outline. They last for centuries, those English yews.

CHAPTER IV

REVERIES ON THE SUBJECT OF LOVE

"Thou demandest what is Love. It is that powerful attraction towards all we conceive, or fear, or hope beyond ourselves. . . . We are born into the world, and there is something within us, which from the instant that we live, more and more thirsts after its likeness."—SHELLEY.

"Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds.

* * * * *

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved."

SHAKESPEARE.

In translating from one language to another it is wise to agree beforehand upon the scope of certain words and phrases; for this can be so much less or so much greater, according to the genius of the language employed, that without definition the use of such expressions is sure to involve misunderstanding.

If you render love by *amour*—and what else can you do?—and then try to make it hold all the shades of meaning possible to the English word, you

fall into grave error. *Amour* is entirely comprehended in love, not so love in *amour*. The difference is considerable; for the French taste for precise classifications has restricted the meaning of our word within very definite limits.

French mothers adore their children; the loftiest friendships subsist in our country; but no one says that he loves his daughter or his friend. We make distinctions between devoted friendship, love of country, love of our fellow-beings, conjugal love, love of parents for their children, love of children for their parents—each kind carefully distinguished. Then, in a class by itself, *l'amour*: love proper, a feeling mingled with physical desire and dominated by it, or even physical desire pure and simple.

The famous definition of Chamfort asperses our manner of love—would that it also aspersed the conception of love which is generally held among Frenchmen, even those best fitted to entertain the vast and complex emotion of love in its entirety.

We confound love with the sexual instinct, being slow to perceive that the latter is only a part of love, not its whole content. After all, it is largely a question of labels. It is no great matter that we give manifold names to one emotion—as the ancients did to their gods—if we are capable of feeling all these emotions, as in general we are. Here, however, we are not discussing French, but English love; and it behoves us to strip our French conception of all its restrictions, give it all space to move in, and a Protean multiplicity of shapes, and forget all our

private notions of the matter; for only thus shall we arrive at an adequate idea of what English love may be.

Love was born of the impossibility of being alone. Our social instincts have of course for their end the propagation of the species; but man, unlike the other animals, had an individual instinct still to satisfy after having complied with the need of the species to perpetuate itself. This consisted of a vague yet powerful longing to understand the mystery of his own being, by contemplating another mystery, that of other human beings like himself. In the society of others his dim mind came to perceive its solitude, and he made a mighty effort; from his cries of rage, pleasure, and pain there slowly emerged articulate speech. Language, much more than caresses, brought him nearer to his fellow human beings, and language was his first step upon the path of love.

He spoke to deliver himself of all the accretions within his breast, deposited there by time. For his ancestors had not employed, in the business of defending, feeding, and perpetuating themselves, all of the energy they possessed; and the residue had gone to prolong the images of the scenes they had just lived through. They reconstructed these, they *played* them, like the acts of a drama; and this persistent vibration, as it were, of their past, this residuum of their late emotions, was the force that organized their memory. Like slag left in a burnt-out furnace, these deposits of energy, remaining unutilized by action and converted into memory,

amassed themselves for transmission to their successors—an inscrutable legacy. All their crude pains and pleasures, the lust of cruelty, the disgrace of having lost a weapon, the depression caused by hunger, the shudder of fear, thus decanted from one generation to the next, formed at length a strange accumulation. For him who inherited it, the rude primitive sources of his treasure were no longer apparent, either as deeds or as memories of deeds. What he received was merely the sweet or bitter taste of forgotten pleasures and pains, which, being inexplicable, appeared to him as sacred.

The joy felt by his ancestors each time the perilous night-time ended, and their concern when they saw its menacing return—these charged for him the pearly dawn with ecstasy and the gold-shot twilight with a piercing disquiet and a fearful charm. He knew a nameless grief that was born of the old weariness of forgotten forefathers, and a hope without a reason, reaching back to the hour when primitive man surprised his enemy unawares or the beast asleep in his lair. As, long ago, he flung down his prey to divide it on the threshold of his cave, so he no sooner felt the weight of his new-born soul than he yearned to lighten the burden by sharing it with those nearest him. Then love was born.

Ever tormented by the sense of solitude that grew with his growing consciousness, man sought to relieve it by finding himself in those about him, in seeing them experience sensations akin to his own. He tried to escape, to mingle, to devote himself;

thus, along with his need of love, another yearning was born—the yearning for immortality. His soul, child of immortality, was first manifested to him by his longing to live, not in himself alone, but in those other beings. That secret soul, already avid of permanence, was quick to know that passing contact with others will leave on them an impression no more stable than the imprint of a foot in the dusty road. She must take up her abode with those others—enter in and possess them wholly. Thus the idea of possession associated itself irrevocably with the idea of love—not, of course, physical possession, for that antedated love; but possession of another soul that had slowly elaborated itself from hidden memories, wherein man might seek and hope to find understanding of his own memories, solution of his own mystery, prolongation, expansion, multiplication of his own life, breathing-space beyond the narrow limits which he must root himself for his little hour, along with the host of forgotten lives of which he was the depository. Thus might he render to the present his inheritance from the past; thus, as the past conditioned him, might he condition the present; thus, the last barrier removed, would the soul of man vanquish his solitude.

To this individual end, far more than in the interest of the species, has the mind of man developed complexity and his form adequacy. All his particles strained toward more beauty, more intelligence, more harmony; in order that he might more readily communicate his deepest emotions, his inexpressible thoughts, and all the accumulation of memories and

intentions that have made him what he is. Ah, we look very different from Adam and Eve, you may be sure of that! In the slow course of the centuries, man's desire for companionship and his yearning to be understood shaped his features and harmonized his movements, always with the goal in view of removing the barrier between his soul and other souls.

This age-old hope of success has given men nobler bodies and richer minds. It has never given them success, it never will. Always there rises a wall between those groping memories striving to find each other and solve the ultimate mystery that is beyond words. But the weariness of the ceaseless effort has given importance to physical desire, as a sort of truce, a breathing-time in the immemorial pursuit. Turning from the elusive quest, man could rest here in a definite, graspable end. In obedience to the prompting of an instinct which serves the species, not the individual, he would now and then lay aside the sublimated egoism of his soul —which bade him spend his life searching in all other souls for those whom he has known, and seeking to find in them the memories he divines but cannot seize—and confine himself to an intenser and more prolonged knowledge of a few. He has made physical possession the goal of love, when it is, in fact, only one of its symbols. It is, as it were, the seal of a compact which still remains to be carried out: the substance of the compact being the effort to approach the original mystery. To take physical possession for an end in itself is to render the mystery only

more inaccessible; for it is equivalent to giving the future a higher value than the past—a serious error, at least so far as the individual is concerned. For that which will be is unknown; whereas that which has been—the immeasurable host of other lives which unite in him to form a single will—constitute his only inviolable possession, the only thing he can grasp in his own entity.

In to-morrow he represents a cipher—he is the sum total of yesterday. His love is to be utilized by the will of those to come; but his will was created out of the needs of those before him. Love is not hope, but memory. We think to hear in it the voice of the future, but it is the past which speaks. Meanwhile, physical desire, beautiful slave to the interests of the species, leads man on for a time, dazzles him, exalts him, often ends by detaching him from the real business of his life, the pursuit of the mystery.

These are truisms. We have them embodied in the legend of Don Juan, that figure so expressive of the human unrest which must still seek and seek without knowing what it seeks, urged onward by the unrecognized power of love. His is a magic figure, round which cluster countless dreams, within which were concentrated the amorous memories of innumerable ancestors, source of his irresistible charm. His mission was to embody these; and he was conscious of his mission. But alas! Physical desire triumphed over love; obliterated, like strong wine, the memory of his appointed task and the meaning of his existence. Endowed with the power and the desire to reveal, in part at least, his secret heart, he

uttered nothing except some disjointed and random narratives of commonplace adventure—and even of these he missed the significance. Born—who knows ?—to succeed in the great object of breaking down the barriers between soul and soul, he ended by becoming the most solitary of mortals. In short, this mock hero in love's drama neither explained nor understood its meaning. He tasted only love's inferior joys, and bore himself so fatuously at last that the Commander very sensibly put an end to his career. Don Juan deserved all the pains of hell—not for possessing three thousand women, but for never truly possessing even one.

To set limits to love—under whatever name you like—is to forget whence it comes and its eternal object. You must neither give it a prescribed form nor expect its association with given circumstances. Love is born wherever there exists the longing to attain and to seize the ungraspable.

My long digression was designed to show that the English conception of love best conforms to the real and primitive meaning of the emotion. They confine it to no category. They evince it, wherever the genius of the species does not interfere, with all its essential traits—unrest, violence, avidity, desperate preoccupation, ambition to dominate.

We mean by love a certain type of emotion. The English mean by it a certain degree of intensity, to which any type of emotion may attain.

To a certain extent, they are like other peoples,

experiencing their tame emotions based largely upon habit, a little upon indifference, and a modicum upon desire. It is beyond this point that love begins with them. Love they may feel for a man, a woman, a child, a parent, a friend, God himself. The object is indifferent, the quality of the sentiment all: an intense state which wholly absorbs the spirit, dominates its manifestations, and results in an agitation of precisely the same kind whether the object is of the same or a different sex, or no person at all, but a religious sentiment.

I should be loath to say that all the English experience this kind of love. It is probable that the larger number never enter the tropic zone, and that even so their warmth is less burning than among other peoples. The exaltation of love is damped in many by hard work, by preoccupation, by mental inertia, by comfortable living, by devotion to sport. Such never know, to the end of their days, the sensation of the inward turmoil—or so I suppose.

For on reflection, I find the strange fact to be that I have never encountered any of these sensible and placid folk. All the English it has been my honour and pleasure to know were exceedingly passionate. But they did not show it.

They find us immoral. We find them alternately cold and hypocritical. Yet discuss the frailties of love with a Frenchman—it will be delightfully entertaining—and introduce the same topic with an Englishman—if he will let you—and you will be

surprised to hear the supposed sinner passing severe moral judgments and the frigid hypocrite either not seeming quite to comprehend what shocking subject is under discussion or else, if he will go so far, displaying an unexpected forbearance. The English know the impetuous strength of love. Passion with them penetrates the innermost sanctuary of the spirit—it, not the nerves, is the great battle-field. Resistance costs more where the spirit is invaded than where the first onslaught is received by the senses, and perhaps gets no further. The English purposely assume austerity when love is under discussion, but they are inwardly indulgent, because they both fear and respect the Deity. Endless talk about love does not please them as it does us; it is for them not an object for philosophical speculation, nor a theme on which to play endless variations, but the supreme affair of life. They dream, or have dreamed, of it too much to speak of it easily.

Among the English middle classes marriages of interest are rare and not well thought of. They are made, of course, among the upper classes, where vanity and luxury exact their toll. I doubt, however, if the young English girl who marries a castle and a fine parure of diamonds brings to the ceremony as tranquil a heart as the maidens of other countries. A little French girl for whom her family has arranged a brilliant marriage without too much particularity as to the person of the bridegroom, easily imagines that she loves or will learn to love the suitor who brings her bouquets and bijoux. The charm of her novel state, the vivid pleasure of the presents and

tender speeches—she takes these sensations for love, and sets out in good faith for a bourne which is not at all as she imagines it. The least quick-witted English girl knows acutely whether she loves or does not love—and to marry without love is to renounce life's greatest prize. The opinion of her family or the public does not weigh with her. If she be beguiled by a title, a fine trousseau, or the thought of doing good to her people, into a union without love, she brings to it a desolate heart not to be solaced by any tender passages she may later permit herself. The great dream failing her, nothing else can take its place.

There are little volumes published in England, which contain lists of questions, the answers to which are supposed to give the key to the answerer's character. One tells one's favourite colour, hero or heroine, poet, musician, and so on; what is one's idea of happiness, and the reverse. I have seen more than once, in these books, in answer to the last question: "To marry a man I do not love." Ah, they know, these young girls!

I should say that the English, even those unengaged by a grand passion, even those most adventurous among them, scarcely ever mingle the idea of love with the common affairs of life.

I mean that in France, the attendant who displays laces to a charming woman knows well how to imply, beneath his professional manner, a thousand pretty things, which, if it were not for fear of losing his

place, he would like to express. In the eyes of the butcher's boy who pauses with his tray to watch beauty descend from her motor-car, there steals a look of inward calculation, as though he were thinking. "Is that loveliness just the loveliness for me?" I do not know what the shop attendants and butcher's boys may be thinking of in England, but certain it is they wear a different expression.

Few Frenchmen are so absorbed in a passion as not to have a moment of lively interest for a passing fair. Few Frenchwomen are so much enamoured as to feel no secret joy in inspiring a passion which they may not return but which lends their days a delicate charm. With us the idea of love heightens all other ideas. It is ever present, or ever lying in wait to be so; glancing hither and yon, playing with delicious improbabilities. The very air of the country is amorous—hence its nimble sweetness. In England, love stays entrenched in the soul; she does not circulate through the air, shedding her mild beams. Thus it is that the outer air of England has always a little chill, yet within those shut-in souls may attain to so high a temperature.

For the English, love is not the rapturous employment of youth, but the web of an entire existence. To be sure there are in other lands folk who remain faithful in age and alteration to the being beloved of them in youth and loveliness. But their emotions have been reduced to a tranquil affection, to respect, to gratitude merely, to a serene indifference,

or to any of a thousand shades of feeling possessing in common a total lack of ardour. The Englishman alone is capable of preserving the illusions of love, of suffering to the end its trouble and desire.

Superb English youths marry women past their prime, and find happiness where a Frenchman would only taste humiliated vanity. Such unions were for long incomprehensible to me; I understand them better now.

Let me describe what I once saw in Florence, at an hotel. Dinner was just over, a perfectly grotesque old Englishwoman was leaving the table. She was swathed in pale blue gauze, and freighted with dangling necklaces of the most bizarre sort, set with alternate huge topazes and huger amethysts. She looked as though she were put together with tacks and hung on wires; yet she had the air of a great lady, moving attended by the eyes of worshipping courtiers. A man followed her, still youthful, vigorous, of a fine carriage, and that look of exquisite cleanliness, bodily and mental, that makes the English so good to see. At the bottom of the room he overtook the old witch of the topazes, opened the door for her, and made a slight inclination as she swept out in ludicrous majesty. At that moment he looked at her—I can conceive no glance from human eyes more full of devotion, warmth, or tenderness. That she had a son who worshipped her like that made the old dame rise in my good opinion. Later I learned that the young man was not her son, but her husband. I was foolishly moved to laugh—but not long.

I happened afterwards to see at close range several of these apparently unsuitable marriages. I heard stories too—which I must not tell—and each one instructed me in the essential persistence of love. Yes, one case I may mention, by way of illustration.

A man—whom I shall call B.—though already engaged, came to feel for a young girl the fatal passion of a Romeo. She equally returned his love. Neither for a moment entertained the thought of unfaithfulness. B. married his affianced, having first told her of his unfortunate passion; and two years later the young girl—Gertrude, let us say—was married to Sir H. M. As she likewise gave plain notice that her heart was occupied, we may feel some little surprise that the frankness of the lovers prevented neither marriage. We are to suppose the feelings of the other two parties to the arrangement to have been deeply engaged; and further, that, being English, they probably looked to the future and the strength of their own passion to bring about a favourable change. They hoped in vain. Lady Gertrude was all devotion, patience, and unchanging sweetness to the man she married, as was likewise B. toward his wife. But they could not love. Lady Gertrude lived in London, B. had gone to the colonies; and thus their lives passed, without knowledge of each other. After thirty years they met, in society. They talked politics and literature, their hearts throbbing with emotions so violent that after a second meeting they agreed to avoid a third. She was fifty-five, he sixty-two, and they still loved. "Lady Gertrude has been the one passion of my

husband's life," Mrs. B. told her friends. She was not jealous. But Sir H. M. was, and furiously; for he had to endure the knowledge that the being whom he adored as perfection, who had given him children, nursed his illnesses, and shared his cares, had never loved man in the world but this elderly personage from India, whose neighbourhood she still dreaded as a source of emotions intolerably poignant. They had met, they had spoken and looked, and pressed each other's hands—the poor husband's blood boiled at the thought. "If we could only fight duels in this country," he said to a comrade in whom he partly confided. He was bald, gouty, his wife obese, and his rival parched to a shadow by Indian suns. Yet all three were still capable of the agitations, the anguish, the cruelty and frantic regrets, all the fearful emotions of youth—in short, of love!

The story was one of touching loveliness and charm; it glowed with the true colours of life and passion. If I have spoilt it in the telling, may the love-god pardon me!

And now I shall try to interpret it, in my own way: to show how it is that in England love can thus survive in its first freshness and fire, and wherein it differs from French love.

With us, I think, beauty is the first ground for love in the mind of the idealist only; also the last which a refined Frenchwoman would ever admit, even at her moment of greatest candour. Neither

sex would allow that it could be a ground for purely disinterested affection; that is to say, love of the mind or the spirit only. With us, beauty exists to trouble the heart, to stir in it emotions which a chaste woman may not confess to, and to which normal friendship is naturally a complete stranger.

But the English are ardently conscious of the beauty of those whom they love. They know the part it plays in their feelings, and speak of it as freely as we do of the mental gifts of our friends and relatives. They are somehow able to see it objectively, without setting up an inevitable sequence between beauty of form and the desire of possession. The fact is, I think, explainable.

The human being appears to his kind as a point relatively stable, an apparent fixture in the midst of perpetual flux; an aggregate of forces which, by dint of union, successfully oppose themselves to change and remain a synthesis which does not break up to form other syntheses. Man clings to this reassuring stability; but it is, after all, an illusion, for, despite himself, he is conscious of the eternal flow. Where he longs for definiteness each of his fellow-beings confronts him under a double aspect—as the individual and as the race; and his reaction varies according as he concentrates on one or the other of these. In both cases beauty plays a part, but not the same part.

Ugliness is the product of contradictions, of failure, of lost strength and vitiated intentions, of a painful series of negations and refusals. It takes

a by-path, full of detours, obscurity, and subterfuge. Its features are not clearly legible; for chance has diverted its development from the logical course which is the will of the species. In other words, ugliness is the result of bad luck and departure from the normal. Beauty, on the other hand, is the result of a continuous affirmation of life and the will to live, has no equivocations, and is easy to understand. It expresses the physical—which are also the moral —virtues of its forbears: adaptability, resistance, self-interest, and conservation of vital energy; the exercise of which virtues insure a successive supply of the rich blood that makes for adequate muscles, abundant hair, healthy skin, and irreproachable anatomy. These are plain signs, which all that run may read; but not everyone reads them in the same way. The interest of the species sees in them the undertakings entered into with her; while the individual, transfixed by the sight of heroic stature, perfect features, a ravishing tint, the delicate roundness of a waist, a speaking charm of face or figure, will think not of the magnificent heritage, but of the present fact that this is the being that answers to his being.

In the economy of our world each nation has its peculiar function. This one is destined to realization for its own sake; and useful from a sort of massive egoism the weight of which will on occasion preserve the general equilibrium. Another is intended to quicken the circulation of the universal life. It belongs to itself less than to humanity, hence its individualism is feebler than its devotion to the

race. The characteristics it would have persist are those necessary to all; and love, in its conception, is not intended for the heightening or perfecting of the individual life, but simply as a means of preserving the identity of the race, for the years to develop it. Thus love does not address itself to the entire being of a man or a woman, but fixes itself upon the phase or the moment when he or she displays the highest potentiality for the good of the race. Such love takes for its object youth and beauty; and it dies with them. The end in view is not that the individual may reach a high degree of development or of happiness; but that the indispensable type should be preserved.

The French may think they seize upon actuality in the exterior charm of those they love; but what they unconsciously feel in that charm is the promise to the race. They suppose themselves in love with the look and bearing of an individual, whereas they are only responding to the mysterious signal displayed by the beloved. The test is that when, with the passing of youth and beauty, the signal is no longer visible, the emotions it aroused either cease to exist or change their character.

A good example of the operation of the law is shown by the position of the child in the French family.

In England the relation between parent and child is not closely intimate. From infancy each age is considered to have its distinct sphere, within which it regularly remains. A parent recognizes in his child a personality and a responsibility. He does

his duty by it, in the most admirable fashion; but he does not let it encumber his walks or his reflections. It has his life and he has his. The child is like the fallen acorn, which becomes a tree distinct from the parent oak. French children are young shoots sprung out of the ground around the parent stock, growing from its root, drawing their substance from it, even a little sapping it by their lusty growth. An English father takes the same care to be himself as if he were not a father. Children are a happy incident of life, but not all of life. His success, if he succeed, is undoubtedly for their benefit, but first for his own; and if they hinder it he knows how to put them in their place. He does not change his habits and tastes for them; his first duty in life always remains that toward himself. The Frenchman becomes a different being directly he becomes a father. It is clear, even without his saying so, that he considers himself to have fulfilled his chief mission. His own development slackens its pace. Perhaps, unconsciously, he abdicates in various domains. He ceases to be the centre of his own activity, and is individually of smaller importance and less intensity, by the measure of the importance and intensity he attaches to the idea of his child—which is great, even though he be not at all the tender and imaginative parent. It is simply, I should say, that having done what was expected of him, he falls back, and subordinates himself, even to the point of folly, to the new being who is himself and something more. This attitude toward the child has nothing to do with the paternal infatuation common

among us. All classes of the French have it, in varying excess: hardened bachelors, immitigable spinsters, husbands and wives who have shirked the cares of family—all of them think of the child as the protagonist in the drama, the tragedy and the farce of everyday life. Even public opinion and the law deal with him as though he were a permanent and not a transitory state! Thus do the French, in the position they take up toward the child, betray that great instinct of the species of which I have spoken. To the child is deputed the continuance of the race—and to continue is greater than to be.

No, not for the English! In them the individual masters the species—they are the great realists.

We are the idealists, the dreamers—we of the swift and clear perceptions, who pride ourselves upon our lack of illusion, our precise valuation of our motives. We do not know our motives. We are unaware that our much decried inconstancy is the badge of our real self-abnegation. The great instinct of the species lies at the root of our abhorrence of fidelity toward ugliness or decrepitude. And conversely: when the English persist in that fidelity, so strange to us, they are but proving that beauty is not for them, as it is for us, the imperious messenger that draws us out of ourselves and propels us on the errand of the future, but a light whereby they read more clearly and possess more absolutely the present.

The English do not attach to words the value they have in our eyes. The eloquence, the fervid self-analysis which in Latin countries are so important

in the business of love, are with the English little developed. Beauty, or their notion of beauty, fills the pauses empty of our fevered questionings, our lyric vows and protestations. Beauty shows them more than a surface, more than a moment; it illuminates the depths and will light all time. She shows them the entire being of the beloved—a group of energies which compose a personality and can be disintegrated only by death. With the personality, the aggregate of these energies, they fall in love, not with the beauty which is only one of its means of expression. It is possible for them to misinterpret the personality, to be deceived, to forget, to avenge themselves, to suffer and die—like other men. But if they have read aright, their love is fixed. What they adore is the very life of a creature, not the ephemeral form clothing that life; so, though the form change, love cannot change. Its warmth and tenderness address themselves to the whole sum of forces resistant to death, instead of youth and beauty only, which are but partial evidences; and love will persist until death liberate the components of the being it cherishes. Love that can change addresses itself to a fugitive symbol; theirs to an incorruptible reality.

There occur among the English, I suppose as often as elsewhere, petty passions without a morrow, inclinations without passion, or only the pale and perverted shadow of its reality; inconstancy in all its phases, and the rest. I do not pretend to say that every Englishman is capable of an eternal love. But I will say—for so much I have seen—that a

goodly number of them love in the way I have described, despite the existence in others of sentimental debilities and even vices. I am told that in the higher classes venal love exists with a frankness and freedom beyond its possibilities among nations notoriously irregular. But the vices of an aristocracy, whether of rank or money, are not greatly important as evidence for the moral health of a nation; whereas their virtues are. The latter, developed by liberty and culture, inhere in the moral structure of the race, in its history, in all the things from which the race has bred its peculiar type. But the correspondent vices, springing merely from excess of fortune and ease, are the same in every country. So far from giving a nation its distinctive features, they chiefly operate to blur the native traits and give them all a family likeness. No; it is the virtues of the great and the vices of the small that best display the national type.

In every novel, one of the two lovers loves more than the other. This truth applies, I find, in the continued novel of the nations: what I mean is, that according to the nationality, either the man or the woman loves the more greatly. I fondly cherish this theory, which is, like all my others, the offspring of ignorance and imagination, and I offer it for what it is worth to the reader—very likely nothing!

I hold, then, that Frenchwomen love better than Frenchmen; and I am tempted to hold that the

Englishman brings to love a loftier ideal and more intensity than does the Englishwoman.

Yet, you will say, in England, where the women outnumber the men, the latter should seem the more precious. And it is true that they are accorded by the other sex an extreme consideration. An Englishwoman may not express in words her admiration for masculinity; but it is apparent in her æsthetic tastes, her moral prepossessions, in all the expressions she permits her spirit, whether important or not. She even inclines, so far as may be, to the masculine ideal, in physical endurance and energy, in her sense of loyalty, in her manner of dressing. Little English girls have greater respect for their brothers than for their sisters. English women reverence physical courage, and even sheer force. I once heard from the lips of the most enchantingly chaste and demure little damsel the ultimatum: "I would never marry a man who could not carry me." Is not the strange little formula a perfect compendium of the cult of masculinity? All the independent Englishwomen who cultivate a passion for liberty and lead successful and interesting single lives undoubtedly cherish within them a deference for the masculine virtues born of vigour and robustness. To a Frenchwoman, Hotspur appears a rather coarse and unlicked youth, without a sufficient dose of mother's milk in his composition. But I imagine the most ruthless British spinster feels such admiration for Hotspur as to pardon, or even not to see, his bad manners.

In the English household man reigns. His simple

quality of masculinity is enough to invest him with undisputed moral rights. It is the constant duty of mother, sisters, friends, and, most of all, his wife, to smooth his daily path, to hide all small annoyances and family cares; to make his course pleasant and incommoded, to serve his freedom, to further his career, his self-development, his success. There are wives who employ all their powers, make political speeches, write articles, and use personal influence to the end of creating careers for comparatively insignificant husbands, who without such co-operation, would have settled down ingloriously to hunt and smoke their pipes. More than one woman of uncommon mental gifts has stifled her intellectual hunger or her artistic instincts and subdued herself to the level of some excellent mediocrity whom she treats as though he modestly concealed the ability to write a "Novum Organum," or a "Paradise Lost." Another will immolate her magnificent individuality to cultivate the genius of brothers who have no genius, or make to the ruling genius of masculinity some other kind of appalling sacrifice.

All this must very much exalt the egoism and vanity of man. With all life accommodated to his pace and ordered for his glory, he necessarily contracts the habits of a despot, leaves to his wife, who acquits herself so well of every responsibility, the loftier flights of sentiment, and, in a word, is the one who loves the less. Yet in practice the thing does not work out quite like this. For the Englishman often has a consciousness of his favoured state, and on the whole does not abuse it. Notwithstanding indis-

putable facts, he is the one who loves the more. Of course I am rash enough to think—as all rash people do—that I know the reason.

The Englishwoman has the same appetite as her brother for a life of action, and her sphere is more limited. She has a thousand avocations: she performs miracles with vast and complex charity organizations; she has her hospital work and her poor children's classes; she occupies herself with the destinies of the Empire and the needs of a district, the interests of commerce, morality, and religion; the management of an exhibition. She writes a great deal. She paints; she plunges into abstruse studies. But she does not go to war, nor to Parliament. She does not—or very rarely—hunt big game, go on exploring expeditions, or practice dangerous sports—the chase excepted. Adventure, in the great sense, is denied her. Finally, unless she must earn her bread, or is a professional artist, she has no career.

A career is the visible end of existence and the discipline imposed for life upon all alike. It demands continuous effort, and returns continuous and tangible results. It is action materialized; of it one can say each day: *my* work, *my* energy, *my* will, *my* time, thus employed, have produced what I was contracted to produce.

More than all others, the English people feel the need of this discipline. To the great business of statesmanship, the lesser business of landownership, and to every other business as well, they bring such a high seriousness that even their pleasures take on

the aspect of professions. They think of them with a sense of responsibility. When you hear the peculiar tone in which they say "my work"—often meaning occupations scarcely entitled to the name—you feel their satisfaction in thus organizing their amusements and avocations and according them the dignity due to necessary labour. This is eminently the constructive spirit, and it is possessed by the women no less than the men—perhaps even more. For they employ upon love, as upon any other well-conducted career, that most English of the passions—the passion of duty.

To the English mind, duty, like so much else, is a conception not bound by absolute limits; it is not, as with us, clearly defined in its essentials. It may take all sorts of shapes, even to the extent of being paradoxical.

When we say of someone, "He has not done his duty," we think of him, and he thinks of himself, as placed—temporarily or definitely—outside the law, and divorced from his obligations. In neglecting a larger duty he is, so to speak, excluded from the performance of smaller ones, having broken the contract entered into with society. If, nevertheless, he continues faithful to minor duties, he gives the impression, to himself and to others, that he is doing more than is expected of him. Herein, as elsewhere, the Frenchman expresses his sense of the absolute.

The picturesque moral code of the Apache is a thing to us impossibly bizarre, even comic; to the

Englishman it would be entirely comprehensible. For the English—I cannot say it too often—have no sense of the absolute. They see nothing ludicrous in the theory that whatever one has done, however low one has sunk, one may still retain an ideal of duty. The ideal may be most humble, relative, unbeautiful, but it remains conceivable, since its goal is not virtue, but a striving for virtue. According to this creed there persists a sort of morality even in the most abject immorality, though it only display itself in the dissimulation which argues a purifying remorse; some sort of delicacy inherent in the most utter indelicacy, if one manage to impart to it a pretension of honour which may perhaps at last become reality. The vilest cowardice is not ignorant of courage if despite, or because of it, the courage of others is perceived as beautiful and admirable. Though one fall from the heights, one may feel in the slime some impulse to shape an ideal suitable to one's situation and commanding respect. And this is duty. It is not essential that one follow it; the important thing is to cherish the knowledge and the desire of it.

The English sense of duty, scrupulously operative even in the most questionable transactions, is not the fruit of a general philosophy of good and evil. Its sphere is limited to the particular good and evil possible to each individual. It is a harmony created by the national instinct for the purpose of augmenting the individual's consciousness of his own existence by means of intensifying his inward sensations. When the sense of duty has taken form, the man

sets it up outside himself and worships it, much as the Greek sculptor fell down in adoration before the image of Zeus he had himself hewed from the marble block.

Their passionate sense of duty ennobles for the English the humblest affairs of life, and invests the material facts of existence with self-respect and even a certain charm. But it is capable likewise of the opposite result: cultivated to excess, it can, like eloquence in the celebrated definition, not only make small things great, but make great things small. In other words, it can reduce a sublimity to a commonplace. And herein I seem to discern the explanation of the theory I have advanced—namely, that in England the women love less than the men.

There is a kind of love whose essence is a conscious devotion to the happiness of the beloved instead of to one's own. Such love unconsciously diverts from its object some part of the spiritual and sensible energy which the lover believes he has consecrated in its entirety. For of its own nature love contains the highest degree of selfish satisfaction for him who entertains it; and when the lover forgets this, its essential aspect, and sets up another—namely, the deliberate procurement of satisfaction to someone else—he gives his beloved a rival in his affections, and that rival is duty.

In other words, one conceives an affection for one's own acts; and not only those that give one

pleasure. It is not imaginable that a man will expend vital energy without care or thought for the manner of his doing it. No, he is deeply interested in his own acts. He may think he hates them; but whatever chagrin, embarrassment, or pain they may cause him, he cherishes them all—and how much more when he may feel proud of them as having been dictated by the noblest sentiments of affection!

An ever-present and beloved sense of duty, manifesting itself at every hour of the day, in small or great acts, ends by insensibly becoming an end in itself, though a happy mental confusion prevents the lover from distinguishing it as such. One loves one's own devotion as much, or even more, than the object of it. Further, the sense of comfort lent by such constant and adequate performance, is a little subduing to the warmth of love; for one ceases to suffer from that fear of not living for the loved one which is so rich a food for passion. Solicitude exalts love; incessant performance appeases it. And, moreover, it continually familiarizes the object.

A single great act of sacrifice or devotion, achieving at one bound all of which love is capable at its greatest height, intensifies in the mind of the lover the image of the being who could inspire it. But the constant repetition of small duties, and the ceaseless attention to detail which they incur, tends to mingle with the loftier aspirations of love a sense like to that which is felt for a helpless infant or a sick person. The sentiment is one of great beauty and sweetness, and deeply penetrates the heart; but it deposits there a knowledge of superiority. It

attaches you by a thousand subtle bonds to the object of your tenderness, but it inevitably a little diminishes his dignity. The priestess whose daily task it is to dust the statue of the god regards it less reverently than the worshippers who come at intervals to bring incense and offerings and implore a miracle.

"I have never regarded a duty, and in especial a voluntary duty, with indifference," says the touching Clarissa Harlowe. Almost all Englishwomen could say as much. They may evince a scorn for this or that duty; but duty in the abstract is an object of indifference to few. Whenever one particular duty is dethroned or outgrown, another will rise in its place; there is, I should say, no possible situation, however anarchical, in which an Englishwoman could find no employment for her inevitable sense of responsibility.

A woman of the Latin races does not like the idea of duty to obtrude itself in love, even love of the most regular character. She naturally wishes for her lover all happiness, and all success; but she feels that his supreme happiness and success lie in her love for him. If she act to serve her husband or her lover, it is with the aim of increasing his love. Her devotion is to her a delight in which she luxuriates, never an obligation; for it appears to her that the gift of her love diminishes rather than increases her responsibilities.

The love of the Englishwoman does the precise

opposite. It makes her take great trouble to achieve her own ideal of herself; and binds the man to her by all manner of small and great pains. But it tends to diminish the mystery of the idol; and in subtracting some—or all—of its divine unrest, to bring her passion nearer to earth. Her affections, tranquillized by the sense of duty accomplished, she withdraws herself a little, and reserves something of her own individuality as a debt owed to herself. She is not possessed by any vain and pathetic yearning to voice the passion that shakes her and attain utter self-revelation; for she feels such effort barren, as compared with her power to put her love into action. Her soul always maintains some inward asylum, some invisible territory; while much of the energy of her love is expended upon her duty. . . . Mary, seated motionless at the feet of her Saviour, holds up to him all her love in the full cup of her soul; the efficient Martha lavishes a deal of hers upon the supper-table—which, no doubt, it preciously adorns.

The Englishman's sense of duty equals the Englishwoman's; but it is differently applied—a very great difference. His duties are other than hers—and that changes everything. The pains of his companion address themselves to the man in an evident fashion. His work, his cares, practical or moral, are directed towards her in a less evident way and less constantly visible to his spirit. In so far as he has a career, a business of great or small extent, to

bring well-being, luxury, or glory into his home; and seeks to increase the social importance of which she whom he loves is a part, or to protect her if her situation is irregular, he works as much for himself as for her. And his pains achieve and enhance his personality. The woman, to serve him, often diminishes hers, and, despite her generous deceptions, she perfectly knows it. In the circumstances, he does not pay out the coin of his devotion in such small change as she. The intimate substance of his love is less mingled with the humble frets of life. His attention does not continually fix itself upon the points of character indispensable to penetrate if he would conduct well his minor duties. Her desire to accomplish them all gives to the wife, in the midst of the blindest affection, the attitude of a mistress of the house, familiar with all its corners, knowing exactly what is in every wardrobe, what riches she can command and what she lacks. He is not so well informed. The happiness of the woman interests him in mass, not in detail; he does not bestir himself to aid her in a career; he does not employ himself without rest to smooth her material existence. He has not, enlightened by a continual preoccupation with the details which concern her, learned to know her as she knows him. She remains for him more secret, thus more sacred. She respects his masculine quality, because it is understood that the man must be strong, courageous, loyal, active, simple, and that to believe him so makes part of her duty. He respects in her the mystery whence limitless passions spring. Despite her

esteem, her admiration, without avowing it, often without owning it to herself, she judges him. He does not judge her, even when he means to and thinks he does. If he loves truly he hesitates to speak of her, and does it in few words. There is in this discretion a sort of religious fear. I saw one day this fear in the eyes of a man who suffered from an immense love. He smothered in silence. He would have liked to complain, to reveal a little of the wrong that had been done him. At the moment of explanation, when he had already said, "Oh well," a sudden convulsion changed his visage, an extraordinary fright appeared there, as if something in him were fleeing from a mortal peril. Finally he turned away; he was silent. He was a strong man, a well-balanced one; one would have thought him then a frightened child. I have never met that state of mind in an Englishwoman tormented by love. But it may exist. I do not know them all.

I mean now to speak of some other manifestations of English love; and, chiefly, English friendship, which is not the least ardent.

They practice in England a species of comradeship, consisting of agreeable and friendly relations between two people, in the course of which few or no questions are asked on either side. It is a kind of deaf-mute relationship. For years on end two people live side by side, have their work and play in common, without a shred of curiosity concerning each other's affairs or personal history. Neither

speaks ill of the other; certainly neither mentions the other with enthusiasm. They do not quarrel, since no tender points are touched upon, neither do they mourn together in affliction. Their mutual friendliness is occasionally manifested, with an impersonal air, a little as one signs a cheque. If disaster befall one, it does not take away the other's appetite. He will put himself out for his friend, if needful lend him money—but he would see him die with invincible tranquillity.

Our most ephemeral fancies, it seems, cost us more than these permanent relations do the English. In any attraction, however slight, of the mind or senses, we engage ourselves more, give more of our confidence, and open ourselves further, even if only momentarily. So it is that we all, from the most fluid to the most solid amongst us, have our memories of unfortunate attachments: permanent dull pains provoked by deception, disloyalty, and misunderstanding, by differences more serious than the acquaintances to which they put an end; by chagrin at neglect, overconfidingness, or credulity, and many another petty pang, not to mention the greater pang of remorse for the outrage done upon our true friends in putting upon their level these chance flames struck up in a moment from some slight spark: as, that they agreed with you in an argument, or you met them first under special circumstances; or you found them lively, and jumped to the conclusion that they were also fine.

The English method saves a great many of these emotional crises, familiar to the temperament that

is prompt to clothe its ideas in reality, and hankers after a little liking from the whole world. The English are more prudent. Yet not always. I have described one kind of English friendship, the soporific kind; but they know others, of remarkable energy, tumultuousness, and depth—partaking, in fact, of the character of the intensest passion.

Such a friendship, piercing and pervading the whole spirit with a power most confident, ardent, possessive, and dominating, invests the being it cherishes with a singular glamour. Something like it exists, in early and passionate youth, in other countries, where it forms a moment preluding the arrival of love. But in England it may become the employ of a whole existence; not being, as elsewhere, a sort of self-delusion of the waiting heart, but the heart's own and predestined business. It may be the sentiment of a sister for her brother, or a daughter for her mother, when the brother or the mother fill the whole place of husband and children, ruling in a heart unwilling or unable to entertain a rival.

I have seen one of these filial passions, and found it of the rarest beauty. Its possessor—or she possessed by it—is a young woman of great charm and intelligence, with a wonderfully receptive nature, a man's energy, and a really original bent. Her life teems with human affections—for she is a perfect friend—abounds in rich activities, and work, of which she accomplishes an unthinkable deal; and is rounded out by the noblest enjoyments to a whole full of impressions and ideas. Yet all this is not her real life. That passes within her, where alone

she is her richest and completest self. Her life is her extraordinary passion for her mother, the memory of whom mingles in all that she does, dominates all, and communicates to her being some precious and mysterious essence. So much the very fibre of her life has her love become that in the daughter the mother is visible, even to those by whom she was not known. When that adored being was suffering, the daughter slept outside her door, and entered at the least sound from within. "You seem to divine my slightest pain," the mother said; "for I hardly stir when you are here." She was, in truth, never elsewhere, nor is she even to-day, when the dear object of her worship is no longer present to her. She is a brave woman, and lives as brave women do when death has taken all from them: she is useful, she endures and smiles; but the active history of her life is done. When you hear her speak—with a thrilling modesty—of the past, you understand the difference between her feeling and those emotions which, however powerful and terrible, bring into play but a fragment of being, or reign but a poignant moment of existence. You understand that hers is the stuff of her life, the blood in her veins, whose glowing course only death can arrest.

Devotion like this is rare, no doubt, as all high and perfect things must be. But friendships like it in kind do exist in numbers; friendships as passionate, as scrupulous, as self-devoting and jealously-perturbing as love is—nay, these are the very substance of love itself!

Though it pretends to a nice discretion and moderation, this kind of friendship-passion is in reality exigent, authoritative, and most unreasonable. It keeps up a constant fermentation; it is magnificent, despotic, intolerable, pathetic in its excesses. Like Ariel, the delicate spirit, it performs sometimes like a harpy, and again like a devouring grace.

Those who feel it are commonly people of intelligence, gifted with more than usual fantasy or an irritable nervous system. It originates, like all friendships, in esteem, admiration, and the lively attraction of one mind and heart for another. But it does not stop, like other friendships, with merely increasing life and rendering it sweeter with the mingling of new ingredients. It is a splendid mania for domination—an appetite less rare than one would expect among a people who set so high a value upon independence and reserve. Indeed, I think the taste for domination springs there naturally, where the need of independence is so pressing. They protest, the English, when you point this out to them; and are even disgusted with your lack of observation. What then, they say, of their proverbial respect for their neighbour's liberty, their traditional lack of curiosity upon their neighbour's affairs? What of their vaunted practice of "giving everyone his chance"? Are not all these indisputably hostile to the idea of domination, and are they not supremely English? Yes, to all this. But when an Englishman abandons himself to a friendship-passion he relinquishes such methods. It is quite justifiable not to admit it.

At the beginning of the relationship he may often belie the influence at work within him, and dissemble in word and deed. He would not wish to absorb his new friend; he is gracefully temperate, and performs with a smile many small sacrifices of self-effacement. He lets no hint escape of his actual jealousy and eagerness. He will never lose his self-control; he asks nothing more than to institute a friendship of modest tranquility—of elegant commonplaceness, even, with a person whom he likes, and who, God willing, will like him—but it is understood, with no sacrifice of dignity on either side. Advances he will receive with restraint; he will carefully let it appear how different from any heady exaltation is the measured and noble harmony of friendship which is the ideal of himself and his new friend. All this at first. Then, some fine day, there will be a bursting of the prudent forms imposed upon sentiments too strong to be confined; and the secret longing for domination will leap out in force. He must recreate the being he loves; must give it his stamp, and make it wholly his own.

To love is to pursue one's likeness. When one loves moderately, one is content to find this less complete than one dreamed; when one loves deeply, one seeks to remake oneself in the image of the loved one; and the more one loves, the more one gives up of oneself. The friendships I am describing are not of this sort. They yield nothing, except their own absorbing affection; in the name of which, lofty and beautiful as it is, they resolve to revolutionize the

ideas, habits, pleasures, even the entire mental structure of the chosen one. For this is to be certain of one's sovereignty—if one can substitute one's own will where another will reigned before. Shall one love a fellow-being for the sake of that which he is ? No, for he must be born again of the friendship, and become a new and different being. This is the price of happiness. They embark upon such an enterprise with impetuous confidence; and at first the beloved is pitilessly censured.

> " Je viens, par un avis qui touche votre honneur,
> Temoigner l'amitie que pour vous a mon cœur."

We are familiar with the source of this reassuring sentiment. Arsinoé hated Célimène, whereas we are speaking of people who love to distraction, whose love makes them ready for any sacrifice or test. Yet not quite any; for they could not sacrifice their influence; so behold them imperiously overwhelming their victim with advice which "touches his honour." Their arguments are as invincible as steel and as pure as gold; and frankness is their text: "If I loved less, I could be silent, for it would be easier," they justify themselves. If one really loves, one cannot suffer faults and errors to blemish the object of so beautiful an affection. It is a sacred duty to point out to the beloved his real beliefs, feelings, and desires, since the lover knows them better than he does himself; and, finally, one shows him the truest respect in telling him without circumlocution just what one thinks of him !

Now when an Englishman sets himself to give you

his candid opinion, it is a fearsome thing. And it is matter of fact that in England people submit to criticism of a kind which to us would be perfectly unbearable. It is possible with them, because neither the critic nor the person criticized thinks of the judgment as definitive. The man under fire is aware that his compatriot is bluntly giving him an unfavourable impression, a hostile moment of his opinion, not its entire content. Yesterday's valuation may have been quite different, nor does that of to-day imply that it will persist until to-morrow—in any case, it has no finality about it.

Our notion is that every speech gives us a permanent synthesis of the mind of the speaker on the subject in hand; whereas the Englishman's most forcible utterance is only one facet of his opinion—or rather, his opinion does not form a solid, immovable whole in his mental operations, but a series of freely moving and modifiable separate images. A human being presents itself to him as a congeries of parts which do not always have the same appearance and which merit each its especial treatment. If, on a given occasion, he reproaches you for deception, he does not imply that you may not, on some other occasion, be capable of sincerity. He will say you have lied, not that you are a liar. If you repeat the fault, he will admit a tendency, but not yet that it is chronic. You might lie for twenty years and then become veracity itself. He may say unhesitatingly all that he is moved to say, for it will neither represent all of his present opinion nor commit him as to the future.

The Frenchman, who aims in all that he says to give a clear and definite formula for his inner feeling, will seldom risk a criticism of a person whom he cares for. If he should see a friend in an absurd and unbecoming costume, he would ignore the fact, for his ridicule would be construed as a sweeping opinion. Perfect candour would lead him to say that despite her tasteless toilette the lady in question was a superior being, and that he admired her from the depths of his soul. The Englishman would distinguish two phenomena—the superior being and the ridiculous garb—and would assert each separately, neither seeming to him to have a bearing upon the other, and neither drawing from him a final personal opinion.

He will not try to combine the incongruous elements of an individual into one significant whole; but will regard each element in its turn and for itself. When he demonstrates, with a solid conviction which is like a blow of his fist, the folly or meanness of a certain action, he is not pronouncing the person guilty of it to be either a fool or a knave. His most violent judgment rarely animadverts upon a complete personality. A Frenchman so berated would be despairingly convinced that his critic set him down for a base soul and a lamentable intelligence. An Englishman will depart quite peaceably; for he has only heard it proven that this time he has said or done something foolish—which may befall the wisest of us—or been overtaken by some single moral lapse—which has happened even to many a saint.

So it is that the English can endure the mutual savage candour which they use, and even apply it—with singular developments—in their friendship-passions. Yet sometimes in such friendships a sombre pride or fortitude will hold in check the desire of domination; then the sufferer will see another preferred to him, and bear to have his friend keep back a corner of his soul or choose his thoughts and pleasures for himself. The neglected one will draw away and give up his place to others, apparently resigned, but always hanging upon a recall. He will give extraordinary proofs of dumb devotion—forbearing a word of blame for his conscious or unconscious tormentor, or else, deducing the noblest motives from his actions. I suspect these silent partakers of the friendship-passion to be suffering from feeble powers of representation; for its effect upon the imaginatively endowed is quite other than this, and profoundly modifies the whole moral code.

Their systems cannot hold out against the imperious mandate of conquest roused in them by their emotions. There is no more thought of decent reserve toward the affairs of others, of waiting till one's opinion is asked, of not judging, of not interfering. For one is driven to interfere. One must prevent this near and dear being from following his own devices; one must demonstrate to him, very plainly, the necessity of shifting his views to their exact opposite; the dangerous folly of self-esteem, the vain, culpable, mismanaged affair he has made of his life till now. One must prove him his own

incapacity to direct himself, one must perturb and upset him, one must pick him to pieces, as a child does a toy.

But though the English submit so calmly to hear the truth about themselves—or what is at the moment another man's opinion of them—there is a matter upon which they are less complaisant. To be criticized is bearable; to be hindered—that is inconceivable. Attacks on their independence are invariably repelled with vigour. Thus, since partners to a friendship-passion are no exception to the rule, their relation is always liable to tempests and lightning-flashes which set it on fire from within and constantly renew its vigour and fascination. We seek in friendship a sense of repose and security; they seek in it—the storm. Conflict is a necessity of their existence; and here it brings to mingle with their love the idea of a duty toward the beloved. Conceive how their zeal to perfect him is strengthened by the delectable anguish and furious pleasure the effort entails! They suffer jealousy more corroding than acid, which they will swear is no jealousy but a noble magnanimity striving at all costs to preserve the beloved from undesirable influences. They taste a grim satisfaction in feeling him subdued, in seeing him marked by their claws. Every sensation of pain or pleasure heightens their fever, until they are abandoned to the struggle, the war of the emotions, and the fierce lust of complete sovereignty over brain and heart and life! In the thrilling sport mingle cruelty and generosity, the most utter tenderness, the need to create and the

need to destroy—two faces of but one desire, the desire for domination.

I have had in mind in the foregoing chiefly friendships between women. But I will instance a case—a famous one—of the other kind. Study Shakespeare's Sonnets and you will find in them, or I err, much that is akin to the complex emotions I have described.

People of sense more and more condemn the discreditable interpretation of these incomparable poems. The twentieth sonnet, the numerous sonnets containing exhortations to marriage, and, above all, the evidence of every other line of Shakespeare, so sane, so robust, so conformable to life, deny the hateful legend in its entirety. On the other hand, it is hard to agree with certain critics who discern in these passion-ravaged lines a mere literary exercise, a pastime of the virtuoso, who, sonnets being the mode, chose a subject at random, and here, as elsewhere, demonstrated his supremacy.

I conceive that the English who support this second view do so in order to prevent further discussion of the "Sonnets" on the emotional side—and thus to render once for all respectable the masterpieces which have no need of such protection.

It is of small importance, either, whether these poems were, as many scholars will have us think, addressed not to one person but several; whether Southampton were the friend in question, or an actor, or both, or some third person besides. What

we seek in the Sonnets is the heart of Shakespeare. And there it is, throbbing with a mighty intensification of the same desperate affection we have discussed above, which is for us French so difficult to understand.

The divine artist felt for his friend the tender and ambitious solicitude of the parent; the timorous reverence of a man for a woman, and the respect one entertains for a hero. His love was English love, and he brought to it his genius, the vastest of all humanity.

Not a nuance is lacking of the formidable and subtle emotions, not even admiration for the physical perfections of the Lord of his Love—

"If I could write the beauty of your eyes,
And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
The age to come would say, 'This poet lies;
Such heavenly touches ne'er touched earthly faces'"—

nor the complete domination of one fixed idea, as where he says:

"And you but one can every shadow lend";

or, in an abrupt and heart-besieging line:

"all the world besides methinks are dead."

Here are the tumults of a passion that tears at the very roots of life:

"As some fierce thing replete with too much rage,
Whose strength's abundance weakens his own heart;
So I, for fear of trust, forget to say
The perfect ceremony of love's rite,
And in mine own love's strength seem to decay,
O'ercharged with burthen of my own love's night.

O, let my books be then the eloquence
And dumb presagers of my speaking breast;
Who plead for love and look for recompense,
More than that tongue that more hath more express'd.
O, learn to read what silent love hath writ:
To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit."

The Sonnets breathe a thrilling sweetness and renunciation. Here the poet thinks of the time when he shall be no more, and says:

"I love you so
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you woe."

Or there emerges the proud certainty of the artist that his love confers immortality:

"And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent."

But we have more to seek in the Sonnets than sweetness, praise humility, and noble pride in the love that had Shakespeare's heart for its kingdom and his genius to give it voice. It takes no profound search to discover bitter jealousy, a desire to criticize, and a longing for domination. The poet obstinately reiterates the necessity of marriage. He censures, and the flattering form only accentuates the harshness of his comment:

"How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame
Which, like a canker in the fragrant rose,
Doth spot the beauty of thy budding name!

. . . . . .

O, what a mansion have those vices got
Which for their habitation chose out thee,
Where beauty's veil doth cover every blot
And all things turn to fair that eyes can see!

Take heed, dear heart, of this large privilege;
The hardest knife ill used doth lose his edge."

"As on the finger of a thronèd queen
The basest jewel will be well esteem'd,
So are those errors that in thee are seen
To truths translated and for true things deem'd."

Again, in discoursing to himself upon his admired theme, he exclaims:

"Ah, wherefore with infection should he live
And with his presence grace impiety,"

and then, addressing his friend:

"You to your beauteous blessings add a curse,
Being fond of praise, which makes your praises worse."

This is severe. But frankness to the beloved is a sacred duty. So he is frank, and not only frank but irritable; for he knows his rights, and resents any lack of respect for them, or what he takes to be that. He gnaws his chains till they clank!

"Being your slave, what should I do but tend
Upon the hours and times of your desire?"

"Be where you list, your charter is so strong
That you yourself may privilege your time
To what you will; to you it doth belong
Yourself to pardon of self-doing crime."

There are scenes, reproaches, premonitions of rupture:

"Say that thou didst forsake me for some fault,
And I will comment upon that offence:
Speak of my lameness, and I straight will halt,
Against thy reason making no defence."

"Then hate me when thou wilt; if ever now;
Now, while the world is bent my deeds to cross,
Join with the spite of fortune, make me bow,
And do not drop in for an after-loss:

"For if you were by my unkindness shaken,
As I by yours, you've pass'd a hell of time";

and, lastly, there is jealousy—at first the jealousy of the friend:

"Then need I not to fear the worst of wrongs,
When in the least of them my life hath end.

. . . . .

Thou canst not vex me with inconstant mind,
Since that my life on thy revolt doth lie.

. . . . .

But what's so blessed-fair that fears no blot?
Thou mayst be false, and yet I know it not."

In that last line one hears the lover's voice break. Then comes the jealousy of the artist who thinks himself misprized:

"I grant thou wert not married to my Muse,
And therefore mayst without attaint o'erlook
The dedicated words which writers use
Of their fair subject, blessing every book.
Thou art as fair in knowledge as in hue,
Finding thy worth a limit past my praise;
And therefore art enforced to seek anew
Some fresher stamp of the time-bettering days."

He has scorn for all portraits not from his own hand. Then with a mournful pride he cries:

"I think good thoughts while others write good words.

. . . . .

The others for the breath of words respect,
Me for my dumb thoughts, speaking in effect."

Read the Sonnets diligently, and you will discern in them, beneath the adulation of the poet with the honeyed tongue, all the tokens of passionate love: its rage, its injustice, its misunderstandings and reconciliations—in a word, the whole range of the drama. Yet this is not love, but friendship—English friendship.

And Byron, that parched and fevered heart, whose passion had surely little of tender softness; Byron, who said, "As to friendship, it is a propensity in which my genius is very limited;" he, too, was, whatever he may have himself believed, quite capable of sentimental ardours. You remember his encounter in Italy with Lord Clare, an old schoolmate. They had not met since childhood, when, in 1821, they found themselves face to face in the country outside Bologna. Byron had behind him all his brilliant, sombre past, all his weariness and ennui. They met, they clasped hands:

"It was a new and inexplicable feeling, like rising from the grave, to me. Clare, too, was much agitated—more in *appearance* than even myself; for I could feel his heart beat to his fingers' ends, unless, indeed, it was the pulse of my own which made me think so.... We were but five minutes together, and on the public road; but I hardly recollect an hour of my existence which could be weighed against them."

The calloused and inconstant heart, the cynic searcher after pleasure failed to recognize some pro-

pensities of his own nature. Not knowing that inward capacity had destined him for a rôle in the high and puissant drama of friendship, he failed to assign to that emotion a front rank among the things he had missed in life. But the capacity was surely present—"unless, indeed, it was the pulse of my own which made me think so." What inward agitation what dramatic tumult of the spirit, vibrates in the words; the precious wasted energies seem here to make a last appeal, and what they might have been springs up and flickers brightly a moment like a dying flame.

My examples are perhaps not quite fair. Only a Byron and a Shakespeare have the souls of a Byron and a Shakespeare, or power to feel with their intensity.

Forty years before the Sonnets were written, there were living in France two men whose friendship abides in the memory like an incorruptible perfume. I think that Montaigne loved La Boétie in as high a perfection as Shakespeare his friend—but differently. Montaigne was a logician, a man of discreet and sober charm; Shakespeare a poet, with a flaming and infinite soul. Yes, and moreover, and most of all, one was French, the other English.

CHAPTER V

ENGLISH SENSUALITY, FRENCH ASCETICISM

" Le corps, cette guenille."

" Ma guenille m'est chère:"—

MOLIÈRE.

IT is my ambition to stir up the two or three English friends who out of affection for me will bear with my remarks, to the end that they and their compatriots may interrogate afresh their time-honoured conviction that we are like maniacs in our thirst for physical gratifications, while with them the moral point of view is the guiding star of all their actions. Shall I succeed in showing the crying inaccuracy of this tradition? It is not easy to persuade an Englishman—even if he cares for you, even if you are in the right!

If one trusts to the dictionary, it becomes impossible to demonstrate the asceticism of the French. One learned volume states that *ascetic* comes from Low-Latin *asceta*, which is, in turn, derived from a Greek word that means " one who practices." This will not serve my purpose. Moreover, what good is my ignorance to me if I may not make up a meaning now and then to please myself? I will risk an audacious variant: ascetic, one who prefers

his mind to his body. And this is what I count on proving that we do, even when we seem to do it least.

One piece of effrontery leading to another, I will now go on to tamper with the meaning of the word sensual. My authorities say "one given to pleasures of the senses." Must I admit this? Sensuality does not consist in any particular action; it is a congenital disposition. I dare aver that there are many people who yield by force of bad example to excesses which end by creating in them a habit that is actually factitious; whereas under different conditions they would have pursued regular and sober lives. These are not the sensual, even though they give themselves to pleasures of the senses. No, the dictionaries do not know what they are talking about. One may eat dry bread and drink water, and practice all imaginable austerity, and yet be sensual. The sensual temperament distinguishes itself herein: that its possessor, being endowed with appetites the satisfaction of which is almost a necessity with him, considers that satisfaction important beyond all others; and so far from being able to regard it with light, half-serious sentiments and a sort of flippancy, accords it a profound and unconscious physiological attention. Now it is a fact that the Frenchman, while appearing to cherish the chance, the hope, and the memory of physical satisfactions, in reality gives them hardly a moment of his undivided attention. All his mental images of them are accompanied by other images of equal if not greater importance to him. Always ready to

allude to them, he is also always ready to employ them as a means to other and quite different interests. It is true he talks about them—oh, how much he talks about them !

Sallust, at the beginning of his "Cataline," observes that the immense reputation of the Greeks comes from nothing else than that Athens produced a host of writers of genius, who in their utterances so exalted the merits of the nation that posterity has agreed to consider them incomparable; whereas the Romans, who prefer to act rather than talk, have not, succeeded in making known all their accomplishments and capacities. But everything comes out in the end: we know now, for instance, that despite the Greek loquacity of the French and the Roman taciturnity of the English, the former are freer of sensuality, for all the boldness of their talk, than are the latter, who often affect to ignore its very existence.

To be really sensual one must love one's body. In England the minor details of life exhibit a loving respect for it and a solicitude for its happiness. In what other country do they make chairs in which you may stretch out at full length and feel as lordly as a conqueror borne in triumph ?

I once visited a home for old men at Winchester. There I saw, among the accumulated rubbish of a century, a wooden armchair, which never could have boasted beauty or elegance of form, and was now decayed and shiny with age. I was passing

this chair when the hobbling old invalid who was my guide stopped me with a gesture and asked me to try it. On his face sat a smirking and conscious smile, like a child's with a secret. I complied, supposing I was being initiated into some tradition of the place. Seated, an extraordinary relaxation and an indescribable sense of repose pervaded my limbs. I felt that I had never been tired and never should be. The muscular felicity purveyed by that piece of furniture it is not in my power to express. I wished to take it away—to die in. Dying would be painless in the Winchester chair!

O incomparable chair! You had the mysterious potency of a talisman in a fairy-tale, the mere contact with which illuminates all obscurities and solves all difficulties. Seated in the Winchester chair, I saw light on many matters. To begin with, I reflected that the humble carpenter of a bygone day must have been a profound student of anatomy. How else could he have calculated the curves proper to insure a free circulation of the blood, and the angle at which one should sit to achieve complete muscular relaxation? But, no. The poor carpenter knew nothing of anatomy, he only knew his own body. When he put himself into a sitting posture, he did not have his head so full of ideas foreign to it that he could not fix his attention on what he was doing.

If his arms, his legs, and his back were not comfortable, he was conscious of it, and did not think it a matter of indifference. He was an adept in the exact adaptation of the lines of a piece of furni-

ture to the limbs it was to support; and was aware of all the possible defects that could mar its efficiency. The profound pleasantness of bodily comfort was of great importance to the old artisan, or he never could have planned and shaped that Winchester chair out of old English wood. And the chair-makers of to-day act on his principle when they build those insuperable chairs of England, to sit in which is to taste repose of a quality that astonishes us ascetics and even vaguely disturbs us, like a guilty pleasure.

The most modest English home surprises us with its skilful arrangements for physical well-being. I have seen in England interiors from which, though every single object was ugly or tasteless, I received a strong impression of pleasing harmony, from the circumstance that everything answered to one need and fulfilled one expectation—bodily ease.. "Sensuality is nothing but the instinct for what is comfortable to us"; and never could there be a better illustration of this definition than is afforded by the furniture of England. How little it applies to the furniture of France!

When a Frenchman plans a piece of furniture, he looks for a design that will gratify the eye and hence the mind. He wants it to be pretty, decorative, and capable of giving pleasant sensations through the harmony of its lines in relation to the lines of the room. The physical needs of those who will use it do not interest him. It is not a question of a chair where one will sit down comfortably, but of a chair that will elegantly suggest the possibility

of sitting down. It is intended to decorate the room—in short, the Frenchman's chair is less a chair than an idea. What affair of his are the people who may chance to sit in it? Believe me, dear English friends, in France the despised body is nothing but a pretext for the mind.

With a beautiful detachment from the claims of the flesh, we choose our furniture for its picturesque quality, never for its ease. We arrange it so as to achieve a good effect, and no matter if it makes us a little uncomfortable. We expect of it only that it will please the eye. For with us, everything addresses itself to the sense of sight—the most objective of the senses—because it distracts one from introspection, puts one into lively contact with the outer world, and forces the mind to compare and associate—functions in which the subjective self plays a small part. Those who live for and through the eye are, naturally, ideologists; and between ideology and the asceticism I have defined there is the difference of but a line.

The English seek comfort—and find it. We imitate them in the search, but we do not attain to the end. We have not the gift for it—the gift of sensuality, which has made them virtuosos in the art of creature comfort.

The English mania for hygiene must be reckoned with the evidences of their care for the body. It forms part of their most valued discipline. Personal cleanliness is their invention, and they have made

it one of the virtues. Their stately dinners are solemn as a religious ritual. Then there is their "rational dressing"; their sport—the universal panacea—their theory of ventilation, of systematic vacations; their "changes of air," provided for and carried out like moral obligations. In a word, their whole existence is based upon a continual pursuit of health. When you hear them talk on these subjects you are no less than startled. They have many excellent theories, and some that are bizarre. No other nation so encourages its pathological tendencies. It is not to the point here whether gouty and "liverish" people do wisely to practice self-refrigeration like a science, or to eat and drink so deeply and so well. What interests us is the ardour, gravity, and thoroughness with which they pursue their systems, good or bad. Affection for the body becomes a province of ethics.

It is not only that they strive to cure their ills, but that they methodically and persistently cultivate their health as well. Reason is with them. What could be more intelligent and rational than to masticate with deliberation, to take regular exercise, to stimulate the activity of the pores, to take liver pills after eating of the fearsome French cuisine? All that might be done quite simply and unreflectingly. It becomes significant when, by dint of mental concentration and a vigorous will-power, it is done with the respect accorded to a religious rite, with which it ends by being almost, if not quite, confounded. This is to have for one's poor carcase a veneration indeed, and a tenderness,

which, far be it from me to criticize—no, I only wish to make my point—that there is always one side of each of us in which we have a more special interest than in the others; which we consider first, and make sacrifices to, because it gives us the greatest enjoyment of which we are capable. It is always one side or the other—the angel or the beast—that bears sway. I scarcely think it is the angel—with the Englishman.

With us hygiene is largely a theory, like so many things. We entertain it as a vague and general notion, having to do with government or specialists; we approve of it from afar, as we approve of the brave, impossible deeds of heroes; we feel the desirability of a proper water-supply for all our cities; and we are sure the health of the army ought to be looked after. Willingly, but not hopefully, we give money to send poor children to the country; and we say a great deal, if nothing much to the point, about the dangers of overstrain. We address such remarks to people in general, not to our acquaintances. And to apply hygiene to ourselves, to make it a principle of existence—we never do that. Except for little babies.

In their tender infancy the children of rich or well-to-do French are bathed and rubbed, fed and exercised according to rule; taught gymnastics and taken to the seashore or the mountains. This goes on until their education begins, and then, for the boys at least, it ceases. Their holidays are cut off, they are too busy to eat and assimilate their food, or to be immaculately clean; and they get less pure

air to breathe. Instead, their poor little heads are to perform prodigies of effort, and in the struggle the child is abandoned to the common system of indifference to physical life which is so characteristic of all Frenchmen. Indeed, to most Frenchmen the scrupulous observation of hygienic laws seems a little absurd. Parents see their little ones growing pale and tired, and say with tranquil irresponsibility, "He is working a little too hard," just as earlier they said, "He is getting his teeth." The weariness seems to them quite natural, whereas it is actually a poison which arrests growth, disorganizes nerves and digestive organs, diminishes the vigour and poise of the individual, and thus his capacity for happiness. But the work must be done, the brain must be developed, for upon it depends the realization of the great, the vital pleasures of life.

Does anyone of us, in directing his personal campaign toward success or happiness, dwell on such details of it as will tend to make him healthy and long-lived? Ask your friend the exposure of the apartment he has taken, which he describes with such enthusiasm. You will find that this insignicant matter escaped his notice. A Frenchman will sleep in a room that is sunless and poorly ventilated —the architects see to that!—provided he has air and sunlight in the scenes of his social activities.

Of all the countries I know, France is the one where, in the great centres of activity, the hours for meals are the most irregular. Some people eat

hurriedly and no matter what because of business, others because they have no business—all, in fact, because eating is unimportant to them. Something more interesting, more pressing, than breakfast or dinner is always in the wind—and these must wait.

Even the Frenchman most gifted with the talent of graceful idleness does not know the meaning of repose. He cannot rest in his armchair, or while taking a cure; he will carry everywhere with him his innumerable projects, his images of the future, the disturbing companionship of his too active brain. Rest wears for him a fortuitous character, the appearance of licence, almost of disorder; it is not the rule.

Men of affairs do not with us find time for the daily physical exercise which would relax the tension of nerves and brain. They do not take every year the month for vacation which English public men find so indispensable that they will let go everything, even at a crisis, and go off to hunt, to enjoy their favourite sport, to relax, to be quiet, to recuperate, to forget their cares.

His vacation is to the Englishman a plain duty. He has it at any cost, even that of earning less money—and he loves money—or of losing some brilliant opportunity—and success is dear to him. The Frenchman upon whom rests the weight of multifarious business thinks of vacations as almost illicit—a sort of theft. Far from realizing that they are his duty, he cannot bring himself to think of them as his right; hence he never comes to them with a carefree spirit, but must be continually occupied with yesterday and to-morrow.

When an Englishman is threatened with a breakdown, he will give up his affairs with his fortune half made. The Frenchman will collapse at the wheel. He loves life, but several things rank before it in his scale of values—one of them is his responsibility. The Englishman conceives that his foremost responsibility is to his health. He must answer for it, first to himself and then to God, who commanded him to cultivate the well-being of the body which in His supreme goodness He gave to him.

The Frenchman thinks of his body when he is ill, not otherwise, unless he is a neurasthenic or hypochondriac. The mere pleasurable feeling of physical existence, without a mental or sensible connotation, would bore him: to feel no pain, to have the skin functionable, the lungs active, the muscles in play, and not to mingle with these sensations others furnished by mental stimuli which stir the blood and excite the nerves — plans, projects, chagrins, pleasures, curiosity, argument—that would not be happiness to him. Happiness to him means a flow of images. What he cares for is the exhilaration of rivalry, the satisfaction of a secret, the pleasure of castle-building; to be able to make himself felt, in all possible ways; to stir up sympathies and intrigues, to exert his influence, above all, to comprehend, to comprehend incessantly and greedily, and more and more. What part can his body play in all that ? It must shift for itself—he will not be conscious of its existence.

Among the signs by which foreigners recognize our irretrievable sensuality, the cuisine is prominent. I would I could agree with them!

It is plain that cooking is an art. What is essential to any art? Why, the selection of one group of sensations to be singled out from all others; and this process of selection has for its first result the diverting of the attention from the object which formed the point of departure. I mean, for instance, that in looking at a picture one first forgets the model. Secondly, this restriction and successful deception sharpen, strengthen, and clarify the attention for the perception not only of the precise phenomena which formed the theme of the artist, but of all allied phenomena as well. This is the action of poetry. Its business is not to induce a vague, indefinite reverie, but to precipitate us into reality with a thrilling violence. The great poets are profound realists, never deceived by appearances, always discerning the features under the mask. Theirs it is not to tempt us toward the non-existent, but to force the real upon us as we should not have perceived it of ourselves—by means of illuminating figure and exalted rhythm, by surprising us, as it were, into clearer perceptions.

Let me take an example. A statue of the human body begins by displacing in us the idea of that which it represents. For our notion of the human body is made of sensations of suppleness, resistance, warmth, and movement, all of which are contradicted by the motionless bronze or marble, which does not suggest those qualities by which we should

recognize ourselves in it. The obstacle is a momentary check. But when, submitting to the allusion made to the human form, we adopt, despite our objections, the theory that an analogy exists between us and the cold and rigid object, our intellectual energy and the power of our vision are actually augmented by the transient repression. As soon as we have given up our preconceived ideas, we readily perceive the likeness between the statue and a human being; and the process has taught us to discern in the human form relations and meanings quite different—in being both more general and more intimate—from those we commonly see in our fellow-beings as they move among us.

We sometimes say of a work of art that is too precisely imitative of the model and too exaggerated in detail: "It has no style." We mean that instead of pointing out to us the essential, which we are too ignorant to grasp unaided, it shows us with useless insistence and futile exactitude that which our untrained, inattentive, incapable eyes could see by themselves—that is, the unessential. The check to the imagination, the stimulus to transposition, all that constitutes the impression made by a work of art, has been suppressed. Art is not meant to reproduce what is known to the vulgar under the aspect in which the vulgar can grasp it. It is meant to reveal that which the vulgar were ignorant of, and which only the greatly endowed can see without training—mysteries not given to all to penetrate, because of their marvellous symplicity. Art points out the path to reality.

The nations that have the greatest need of art are those drawn on by interest in the game, by intellectual enterprise and speculation; in whom enthusiasm and lively imagination tend to obliterate the present; whose senses, in order to be satisfied, must have the collaboration of their thoughts; who, in short, are less material. Art, by revealing to them the hidden beauty of familiar things and leading those emotions toward the pleasures of the senses, acts as a necessary counterpoise. It may be that the nations consumed by the passions of the mind, by excessive intellectuality, are driven by the instinct of self-preservation to perfect the art which is not a flight heavenwards but a recall to earth.

Those who resolutely remain on the solid earth have not so much need of art. They produce it, and admirable art too. But they might not have produced any—they would have survived without it. Now then! The French cuisine is a subtle art. The English cuisine, if one admit its existence, is a thing of dull and pathetic mediocrity. This is because, as I hope to show, the English are of a sensual, the French of an ascetic temper.

It is not all of cooking to prepare food in such a way as to change its appearance and do away with the idea of decay and corruption which necessarily attach to the dead things we eat—from flesh like our own to vegetable foods, which are no sooner cut than the germs of decay are at work in them. Savages know how to roast a joint of enemy—but that does not make them cooks! The cuisine addresses itself

to the mind. The interest it affords goes farther than the mere immediate sensation. Its subtleties give free rein to the representative imagination. It is to be employed as a child employs a toy. He does not see the chairs and curtains of the drawing-room; he sees the hunter's tent, the rocks, the precipices; he sees danger and glory; visions of the future and ancestral memories—a complete and thrilling epoch. His toy is a key to unlock time and space at his will.

The epicure who slowly rolls on his palate and feels melting in his mouth an ortolan that has been treated in the manner prescribed by the best tradition, is in the same poetic and creative frame as the child who hunts the white bear in his mother's drawing-room: his pleasure lies elsewhere than in the thing itself.

Taste is a sense full of unexpected developments. It has several stages, so to speak. It first perceives flavours as the shapes of material objects: acid is pointed, salt zigzag, pepper designs a lively arabesque, bitter is like a blundering insect that jumps here and there and settles wriggling on the palate, sugar is a revolving wheel, fat spreads out like a sheet. These are first impressions—beyond them one enters an esoteric zone. Ethers mount and float, communicating themselves powerfully; subtle perfumes reign. This second phase of taste in operation cannot be described in words. A dialogue goes on between the organs of taste and

the attentive brain—a dialogue that has not to do with rose-coloured presages of digestion, but with inexpressible things—perhaps compact of memories linked by a common ancestor to some sensation vaguely parallel. Who can say whence they come and what evokes them — these pleasures of the sense of taste beyond its purely physiological stage ?

The English stop at the first stage. They do not ask of solid or liquid food the stealing, sinuous perfume that stimulates the mind. They demand the satisfaction of a harsh and irritant resistance, from which they get the same pleasure as from a Turkish towel on the skin. How can I know that ? Why, everything proves it. Wines made for their consumption are strongly alcoholized. They dose their food with crude sauces that smell like medicine. They cover everything with red pepper, which has no aroma and simply rasps the palate. They eat quantities of hot pickle. They regularly superimpose very biting tastes upon very flat ones, not knowing the harmonious flavours that succeed and complement one another without offensive shocks, or even the rich and eloquent savour of the humble stew that simmers on the fire of the Paris concierge.

Their sense of taste is uncultured. It needs not to be otherwise, for food affords them so simple and satisfying a pleasure that they can dispense with any aids meant to fix their attention on the fact that they are eating.

An Englishwoman once said to me: "I cannot

endure that habit you Frenchwomen slip into so easily when you live alone, of having luncheon served on a tray. A meal is a business important enough to perform properly, at a table, in a dining-room, instead of getting over with it in that ridiculous hole-and-corner way, with your mind on something else." "With your mind on something else"—there is the point. This is what they never are, absent over their food. At table they do not need other entertainment, they never attempt pleasantries or flights of fancy. They eat with a solemn satisfaction, for frivolity is not compatible with deep enjoyment.

Let me mention what I consider a telling indication of this intense and serious—because profoundly sensual—absorption in the process of eating. French novelists often choose the table as the scene where the action of their book develops; dinner-table talk has a notable place in their novels. The conversation of two neighbours outlines the plot, the whole table supplies characters; and this method corresponds to reality, the French dinner being an occasion which intensifies life and heightens sociability. In English novels hardly anything definite or important ever takes place at the table. Animated existence, exterior interests appear to suspend themselves at meal-time. The business of the hour is to eat.

A distinguished English author once said to a friend of mine: "A French dinner always reminds me of what the sittings of the Convention must have been like." Certainly no such idea could be evoked

by an English dinner. There are good talkers in England—there may even be a few garrulous by nature, certainly not many—but they never talk at table. The great pleasures are silent pleasures.

In the English cuisine there is no variety. This is logical. Variety is introduced for the purpose of rousing interest, and their interest in these matters never sleeps. It is not necessary to tease the imagination by novel combinations and unexpected seasonings. Such manœuvres are superfluous where appetite is endlessly renewed by the memory of enjoyment, and where pleasure lies in the act of eating, not in extraneous surprises and suggestions.

The English eat tremendously, and what is more extraordinary, display a visible content in having eaten well. Or perhaps it is not so extraordinary after all. The man in whom mind preponderates enjoys the desire as much or more than the realization, upon which he often becomes melancholy; whereas the true sensualist feels, on being satiated, a serene and spreading satisfaction. The consciousness fills him that he has performed one of the duties imposed upon him by his particular type of organism; and with his destiny accomplished his physiological conscience tastes the sweets of glorious repose. The heavy and abundant food has the further effect of directing man within himself, increasing the sense of his physical being and closing up more avenues to the outer world—all which is sympathetic and conformable to the English genius. The "heavy breakfast," after which the Englishman goes to his business, increases his energy—which

is good—and does not dispose him to scatter his soul in foolish expansiveness toward each passer-by, which is even better.

The English politely tell us that they like our cuisine; in fact, the very rich ones have it in their homes, and all the dearer restaurants in London have a French chef. It may be true that they like our cuisine; for my part I find it hard to believe. But they certainly do not comprehend at all of what it consists. It always seems to them an evidence of luxury, a sign of perversity—at all events, something exceptional. If they genuinely liked it they would adopt it, and they have not. The national cookery is the familiar dish on the tables of the lower middle-class, not the gilded viands of the millionaire. The lower middle-class Englishman eats roast mutton, cold or hot, nearly every day of his life, with the same brutal condiments, and therewith is satisfied to his very marrow. The simplicity of his taste is confirmation enough of my theory. The widely accepted confusion between refinement and sensuality is surely an error. Far from establishing the fact of sensuality, refinement affirms its absence. Refinement means the existence not of senses violently and powerfully developed, but of tastes that are extremely delicate and fastidious, to the extent that so far from being sensitive to the ordinary appeal, they exact a degree of perfection and rarity, a multitude of possible meanings through the associations they evoke, to the end that every

object which can so attract them will, through them, address itself to the mind and broaden its conceptions of beauty and pleasure. In refinement there is more disdain than appetite, more reservations than enthusiasms. It is a development of the critical sense which is the very opposite of sensuality. A Frenchman annoyed because his sauce is not smooth, is a spectacle of less dominant sensuality than an Englishman absorbing his daily mutton with a solemn gratification which he assumes to be austere.

If an illustration is necessary to drive home the point that his pleasure is neither austere nor moral, but boldly physical and that he knows it, vegetarianism will supply the example. In France, the vegetarian is, with rare exceptions, some poor wretch suffering from indigestion, joylessly submitting to a vegetable diet as he does to pills, or drops, or tablets. In England vegetarianism is a creed, an active desire to reform society. Women go into vegetarianism in great numbers, and the women of England are more and more becoming the leaven of unrest and rebellion which will yet transform many a thing in that country of slow-moving wisdom. They are vegetarians because they are unsatisfied, not for hygienic reasons. Their regimen has a character of aggression and protest, being directed against a national tendency which they clearly perceive. They know the intensity of the pleasure their compatriots derive from their hearty food; they know, too, the effect it has of ossifying the mind and reinforcing the instinct of conservatism.

English vegetarians recognize the sensuality of their compatriots and wish to attack it directly, as well as the egoism which flows naturally from it.

The Frenchman is expert in the cuisine; he makes a study of it. To eat well seems an affair of great moment to him. But on looking more closely, we find that as a rule he has a small appetite, and that his meal hour is the first to be sacrificed to other interests. Passing for a gourmand, the truth is that he is indifferent to his food, and goes without it more readily than the people of other nations.

In the Transvaal War the English troops complained of being without sweets, and the good Queen sent them plum-puddings at Christmas. Never was there a French Government so tender-hearted as to send sugar-plums to its army in the field. What delightfully witty and irreverent *couplets* would such solicitude have inspired in France! Queen Victoria acted wisely, and showed a solid understanding of her people; but we are also wise in not introducing the paternal custom. Southey, in his "Life of Nelson," relates that a lieutenant of the Royal Navy, taken prisoner at Vado, wrote to the Admiral describing the last battle and the French army, and saying that a barge's crew could have taken a hundred of our men, who were hardly more than children, and all in rags. He might have added—and with empty stomachs. He deluded himself, that lieutenant. Those ragged and hungry children were invincible,

being almost frenzied with curiosity and love of adventure, and starving not for victuals but for glory. They were fighting not with their bodies, but with their heads. The Frenchman does not want food to make him brave: he despises it, he dispenses with it.

Watch him at his solitary luncheon in a restaurant. After having diligently scanned the card, his eyes rove here, there, and everywhere. He sees a pair together and mentally constructs their history; watches a pretty woman, and has a hundred romantic speculations about her; follows with his glance the people coming and going; gives them his sympathy or ridicules them to himself. He reads his paper and waxes indignant at the deeds of the other party in politics; studies the theatrical gossip. Do you imagine he wastes a thought on the consummate sauce upon his plate?

Take the Englishman who may be at the adjoining table. What a look he bends upon the dish served to him, as though he would seize it with his eyes! With what fierce concentration he chews! With the progress of the meal he grows more serious and attentive, while the Frenchman, with every mouthful he takes, forgets more utterly about his food.

At our dinners all the mental activity of the diners is early concentrated upon the conversation. They will eat dishes they do not like, and refuse their favourites, from not looking at what is served them. The perfection of cookery cannot long fix the attention of a Frenchman on itself; instead, it spurs him to talk gaily, to be eloquent and gallant;

it makes him want to be in love with his neighbour, to make clever repartee, and argue brilliantly. Ask the epicure who is putting his finger on the flaw in a ministerial policy, or telling his neighbour how much older a certain actress is than the twenty-seven years she owns to, what it is he is eating—he will not have realized.

But why are we so particular about our cooking? Why, indeed, if not to convince ourselves of the importance of eating?

One does not talk much about foregone conclusions. It is when we are not certain of something that we labour with many words to assure ourselves of it. The Frenchman is more detached from the pleasures of the table than he thinks or says. He has invented a savoury and attractive cuisine, precisely because he needs in this field as in others to combat the tendency of his mind away from the physical. Conversely, where a physical sensation already exists, in keenness and charm, where the nerves are always disposed to it, where it already occupies a large field in the thoughts, it becomes unnecessary to intensify it further by means of variation or subtlety. A Frenchman who ate every day roast mutton and boiled potatoes would soon cease to observe whether he ate or not. His appetite is princely fastidious and easily bored. It will tire if he does not supply it with fascinating novelties; and sometimes it will take those novelties to spin dreams about, instead of other matter. Like all his senses, his sense of taste is not self-sufficient, and not satisfied with local enjoyment: it will have

the collaboration of the mind, which it will presently leave with all the work to do.

It is in their literature that really clinching and indisputable evidence is to be found of the sensuality of the English.

We read a good deal in France the wonderful literature of fear produced by English writers. We profoundly enjoy this particular form taken by their powerful imaginations; but we have never done anything worthy of notice in the same line. We do imitate their detective stories, which are amusing and not very horrific; but the literature of fear is a purely English product.

Edgar Allan Poe was not English but American. He was, moreover, alcoholic, and the substance of his terrible art was drawn from the visions induced by the powerful poison. He is an exception as much by the singularity of his genius as by its determining causes. Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, a Frenchman, left us pages full of unrest and fear; but the brain of that strange man was decidedly unbalanced. It is in England that they write stories to make the flesh creep without being either geniuses, mad, or inebriate. A large number of perfectly sober, sensible and well-conducted persons do a thriving business in the art, giving thereby intense pleasure to a large number of perfectly sane and well-balanced readers. The explanation of this lies in the simple fact that English readers do not allow English writers to write books that are—let us say licentious.

The plentiful, irresistible fear which they create, with an ease surprising until one understands its source, does not consist in a sense of the danger run by some imaginary person in the book. It differs in kind from the emotion caused by stories of adventure, full of mysterious villains hiding behind curtains, and goblets of poisoned Malvoisie, in which scenes of murder, suicide, burglary, madness, cruelty, and treason succeed each other. This sort of fear, felt vicariously for the fictitious person in whom the author has succeeded in interesting us, is similar to what we should feel, for instance, in an automobile accident—only weaker. It inhibits. The heart, contracted in a sudden spasm, fails to send blood to the head, and activity ceases; one cannot think, one scarcely breathes. The pleasant feature of this direct and simple fear is the reaction from it; for the fear itself is unpleasant while it lasts. Afterwards one thinks one has had a crude sort of pleasure, whereas one has only arrived at the enjoyable moment when the blood resumes its normal flow and begins to renourish the brain. It is a harmless sort of fear, affording the same satisfaction as a fainting fit, where a thing painful in itself involves a delicious moment—when one "comes to."

The fear of the English books has not these simple characteristics. It does not inhibit, it super-excites; it does not suspend but accelerates the beating of the heart; it does not arrest the activity of the brain, but whips it on. It shocks the nervous system, producing an uncomfortable exaltation

hard to define, nor, in truth, does one wish to define it.

Its essence is the supernatural. Not the supernatural dealt in in nursery fairy-tales, where animals talk, where one species of creature is endowed with the faculties of another species, where the virtues and vices are prettily converted into persons, either wholly charming or wholly the reverse; and where ghosts figure that you could not tell from living people if you did not know beforehand. This comfortable sort of supernatural is satisfied with putting a little "make-up" on the known. The supernatural I mean makes a persistent feverish allusion to the unknown. There is no light, capricious play of a free imagination; the author seems less to invent his fancies than to be possessed by them. They might be the revelations of a necromancer, too exalted to restrain his speech. They are instinct with, and they communicate, a perilous curiosity of arcana forbidden to human reason—a curiosity cruel and alluring as physical passion—of which it partakes.

In order to make the contrast between what I shall call the fear innocent and the fear voluptuous, I shall perhaps be allowed to take an illustration from Poe rather than from an English author, since Poe's tales are so familiar as rather to simplify explanations.

Take "The Pit and the Pendulum." A prisoner lies prone and in bonds, while over his head swings a crescent-shaped blade which at every vibration comes closer to him, and must in the end slowly

crush him to death in a way horrible to think of. The situation is described upon our level, and in our atmosphere. The poor wretch endures a frightful and uncomplicated anguish of terror, and we share it. Will he be lacerated by the infernal pendulum? We hold our breath, for Poe is a magician. When the man escapes from the pendulum, the pit, and the rats, we feel our hearts beat again and the blood replenish our lungs. The whole gives us the pleasant sensation of a new lease of life—what we have felt was the fear innocent.

Turn to that sombre narrative, "The Fall of the House of Usher." Here is quite another story. A young woman inhabits with her brother a gloomy mansion in a sinister region. She is taken with a strange illness, supposed to be dead, and buried in the chapel of her uncanny home. She has not died, and on a night of storm she escapes from her tomb and seeks her brother and the friend who is the narrator of the tale. If this were all, it would disturb us for the time, for the dead restored to life can count on producing a certain shock, and then there would ensue a happy *dénouement*. It must generally be pleasant to learn that, after all, somebody has not died. But this is far from being the substance of the drama, which centres in the poisonous poetry of the whole surroundings and their relation to the mental state of the hero, who is the brother of the living dead. What a drama it is! It haunts the memory—not a week, but a lifetime. While I was writing these lines there rose in the depth of my heart the old insidious fear I felt when

I read the tale. Nothing could induce me to read it again.

The real matter of "The Fall of the House of Usher" is the mysterious struggle of an anxiomaniac against invading fear—a fear of every moment and no reason, without form or visible object; in short, pure fear. It creeps up behind him and touches his shoulder in the shadow; it whispers indistinctly in his ear, endows everything he sees with equivocal meaning. It brushes past and calls him from a distance, then glides nearer until he feels its cold hands in hideous caresses on his very face. It apprises him of something. What? Tortured by inescapable and swelling horror, we divine that the mind of this man perceives what we do not perceive. What is it? About him—and about us—the air moves thick with presences invisible and unsupportable. From the distant room where, after the funeral, he sits and affects to listen to his friend reading, he sees his sister stir in her coffin. He hears the sound of her desperate movements, and how the wood cracks and splits. He knows she mounts the stair, that she approaches the room, that she is present. And so powerful are his sensations, that when a gust of wind flings open the door and she appears in her bloody shroud, he falls dead. Not from having seen her, but from the nameless things he has heard, seen, and touched while he sat there quietly, with bent head, in his arm-chair.

We still the unbearable vibration of our nerves by telling ourselves that the man was diseased. What does that signify? His disease taught him

to see and hear despite natural obstacles; to know in advance the atrocious fate in store for him. His disease was simply a power of perception and foreknowledge incomparably higher than that possessed by healthy people. He was not mad, he invented nothing, he simply knew. He went beyond our sphere of consciousness, and he leads us to the brink of an abyss of frightful darkness, illuminated by gleams still more frightful. This black pit where we stand with him, cowering and thrilling with mortal terror, is not emptiness or a delirium of insanity; it is the Unknown, alive with shapes of things for which we have no name.

And the whole tale is sheer invention! No, as far as I am concerned, I do not call it a tale at all. I prefer to give it the name that belongs to it: I prefer to call it a Temptation.

The sanest Englishman will surrender unresisting to this appetite which tempts him on toward the unknown and the unnameable, and introduces him into a world the atmosphere of which suffocates the reason but affords the narcotized brain prodigious pleasure, tracing laws, analogies, and possibilities beyond the field of its sane operation. This dangerous region is confessedly a province of the English mental territory. Thither they go, as one goes to the country, in order to rid themselves of a surplus of sensations.

Those terrible phantasmagorias are their violent reaction from the world of realities, cant, and mor-

ality—their escape from the limitations placed about their actually strong instincts. When they once begin to entertain dreams of the world beyond the visible one, they are not satisfied with fairy-stories, and their imagination is unbridled in its audacity.

The literature of fear always tends to the establishment of positive relations between the commonplace and the impossible; and it always succeeds in rendering the latter so logical that we are forced to admit its existence. It convinces us that the impossible is all about us, that only the weakness of our senses prevents us from seeing it, and that what are really impossible, non-existent, are the things to which we cling in order not to lose our heads.

It is indispensable to us, in order that we should keep our mental balance, to believe that in both the material and the moral world everything can be connected with phenomena we are capable of grasping. It is possible to accept even unknown and incomprehensible things, when they can somehow be linked on to the known. But the unrelated unknown, that which is inconsistent with any part of our known, and demands that we renounce everything we were before certain of, even to the reality of our own existence, scatters and dissolves the very elements of our being, and sends the mind far astray upon strange paths.

We always feel a certain disquiet when we hear a fact, an opinion, or a narrative in which we discern an ingredient that refuses to fit into the established scheme of things. If such an element is of strong and solid structure, though we do not

see the foundations of it; if it actually succeeds in making reality look pale and inconsistent beside itself; if it causes the suspicion to steal upon us that these anomalous conditions contain truth of a different order from our own but still truth, the laws governing which are beyond our grasp, then our disquiet becomes fear—fear of a kind that fascinates, that rouses in the mind a poisonous curiosity, and in the body the condition we call goose-flesh.

It is superfluous for me to enter into the sources of this wonderful English art of fear, to discuss whence it comes, and what sort of pleasure it gives. A great English author has been before me, and said all with such power and profundity that nothing remains unsaid. I speak of Robert Louis Stevenson, and "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

Dr. Jekyll is a wise and virtuous man, led into hypocrisy by his love of respectability. His honourable career has known a few weak moments, like most other honourable careers. Like all other good persons, he has his temptations. Most of them he repels, but admits a few of the minor ones, and is guilty of some such small moral failings as could only make the harshest censor smile indulgently. But his pride makes him fear that even these faint blemishes may appear; and thus he is at great pains to dissemble peccadilloes which, openly avowed, would be negligible, but concealed assume a sombre importance and dramatic value

which give heart to the mystery. On soil so prepared, the demon of curiosity sows his seed. Dr. Jekyll's scientific researches have led him to the discovery of a chemical which acts on the brain, so as to dissolve the elements of personality. It temporarily paralyzes certain faculties and habits of the mind and permits others to take their place. The judgment is subverted and the special character of the will-power transformed. In effect a new being rises from the old. Jekyll takes the drug, and after a physical upheaval like the pangs of dissolution, he comes to himself—but to a different self. He has separated his soul into two, and freed the unknown half: as Jehovah took a rib from man and fashioned a being unlike man in its interests and its passions, which, though sprung from his very being, could rebel against him, and is even sometimes willing to perish, if it may but destroy him at the same time.

This new soul of Jekyll has transformed his body. Jekyll is nobly handsome; Hyde, the double, is repulsive to a degree. Swollen with a vast capacity for crime, he gorges upon every sort of infamy, and whenever he is weary of lusts or needs a refuge from discovery, he takes the drug, and resumes the stately form and lofty morals of the good doctor. But at each rebirth, Hyde becomes stronger; and Jekyll, who had at first enjoyed the unbridled play of his lower passions, is horror-struck. Hyde is always at work within him, demanding to be set free. Soon he is able to emerge without help of the drug, and next the latter is powerless to make

him return to his cage. Jekyll has unchained Hyde, and Hyde reigns, up to the moment when a last outburst of moral purpose destroys the monster and Jekyll at the same time. The doctor dies in the form of Hyde; Hyde poisons himself because Jekyll wills it.

This terrific history seems to me neither more nor less than a parable of English prudery, which imprisons instincts of great violence within an icy exterior, thus forcing them to seek an outlet in the sensation of fear, born of contact with the unknown, that rasps and stings the live nerves into the same state of exaltation and sensual frenzy that is produced by sexual emotion.

How different a world, for instance, in the reassuring pages of Hoffmann! There is nothing sinister about his naïve and plausible phantoms and genies. They carefully preserve all the popular traditions which have endeared them: the ghosts show proper remorse, and do their spiriting in mannerly fashion; the devil is always perfectly recognizable; and each and every spectre knows his province, like the honest symbols that they are. They do not offer to step down from the stage and pretend to be like us; they have a strong professional sense, and the whole duty of ghosts and devils is always before their eyes. Nothing is farther from them than the desire to creep up invisible, and then suddenly menace our familiar realities. The comforting solid facts of life, which

we can see and touch, do not swim for them in a dissolving vapour.

But when the Principle of Evil, instead of appearing as a gentleman in black velvet, accompanied by phosphorent light and a smell of burning, manifests itself as Mr. Hyde, we are sensible of a choking horror, and at the same time of a mordant pleasure. Not Jekyll alone, but we, with him, clutch at the mystery and release the elements of being. We admit the existence of this power to become another self; and forthwith every face we see works with gleams of hateful metamorphosis. We espy in everybody this possibility of the double. It has, of course, nothing to do with a capacity for dissimulation, for with that we are used to deal, as part of the necessary machinery of social existence. No, it is the veritable double, a complete and separate entity, living unknown to him who produces it. It is the exteriorization of some propensity, some evil thought or unsuspected vice, that becomes stronger than himself, overpowers him, strides out and takes his place. We begin to be assailed by poignant memories of eyes looked into a hundred times, and on a sudden become unfamiliar, of bewilderingly strange words and acts committed by a friend whose inmost being we thought we knew. Whence comes the evil possession that cuts the heart like a knife? We open our arms to Jekyll; it is the unknown Hyde we receive within them. We have encountered the double, the overwhelming possibility burst into fact, the idea become being. Yes, it terrifies us to read this

book, for the author shows us—himself trembling the while—how souls are witches' cauldrons, whence may rise creatures whose very being is an inscrutable mystery. We fear the Hyde in ourselves, who may at any time shake off slumber, stretch himself, and demand life. Have you never felt him? Have you not had your hopes and plans suddenly blighted, as though with an evil breath, though no one touched them but yourself? In all you have said and done are you sure it was you who controlled your deeds and words? You feel about and within you occult presences always ready to leap into action, yet you cannot govern or even grasp them. You fear, and you are drunken at the same time with your sensations; for this fear tells you something: that beside the cauldron, over which hangs the witch and tosses in her baleful drugs, one is licensed to touch and handle forbidden mysteries; that one has escaped one's bounds, and is breathing a glowing air in which death and transformation weave their terrible charms. This is the atmosphere of sensuality.

And such, undoubtedly, is the gist of the pleasure evoked by these equivocal books. They are a genre invented by the English, who use them as a safety-valve to surcharged emotions. They are a subtle device to mask an existing truth and actual necessity—like the half-truths with which we try to cover up a secret that obsesses us. To the English mind it is contrary to dignity, morals, and

religious feeling to give expression to instinct by means of direct formulas; so they give it vent in the emotion of fear, which seems a subject of legitimate discussion—certainly as far as the poles asunder from our shameless allusions. But it appears to me that they deceive themselves.

Sensuality loosens, as it were, the fibres of the individual, and makes him for the time indifferent or scornful of his own personality. It is, properly speaking, the physiological spirit of adventure. Egoism, the instinct of self-preservation, counsels man to remain within the narrow laws which fence about his brief span of existence, and to increase those safeguards all he can. It is to his interest to hearken to the voice which says: "Thou shalt go no farther, thou shalt know no more." But sensuality prompts man to break laws, to encroach upon his capital of time, to seize the veil of the goddess, to move boldly on the unknown. Sensuality interrogates the unknown, and pretends to a control of it. At the bottom of all fleshly desire is the suggestion of new life, the possibility of changing the face of the earth, of creating a Mohammed or a Napoleon. Thus the least stirring of the sensual within us shakes, as it were, the universe as well. Not that our minds are aware of this: it is our instinct only that thinks and dreams upon it, knows the pride and torture of desire—the domain of mystery and liberty. Sensuality rejuvenates the universe, frees the spirit from the weight of matter and opens up space. The mighty law of change surges in it and transcends all limits.

These, the known operations of sensuality, are they not all applicable to the effect produced by the literature I mean, the heroes of which, diseased to the point of genius, frenzied by curiosity, tempted by the unknowable, mix drugs, employ talismans, trouble the repose of death and shatter themselves upon the supernatural? The fear they feel and make others feel, full of a devouring joy of possessing the unknown, a luxurious madness of pride and a fierce exultation over invisible perils—what is it but the very image of the other sensuality, only in more conventionally proper garb? This English art of fear is very beautiful—yes, and full of self-revelation.

We French have no literature of fear; but we have a pornographic literature, more's the pity.

Only a very small number of people have leisure to live in a foreign country long enough to form such relations as permit them to penetrate the real heart of the race. It is the business of books to inform the others, who cannot mingle with their neighbours, yet are curious concerning their psychology. From literature they learn the habits, tastes, and characteristic interests of a strange people; and having read, think to understand its national character entire. Now we export a mass of literature—if I am to call it that—which portrays the French as extraordinarily vicious, incapable of seriousness or steady work, and solely occupied in a besotting round of excesses and cynicism.

This "literature" must have a market, since a certain number of people can live upon it and even afford to pay hack-writers to supply them with indecent material for their narratives. The novels thus produced are published under the name of the contractor, and procure him round sums of money as well as the disgust of respectable people. There is no doubt that the stuff is read; but less in France than elsewhere, and there, neither by as many people nor by the precise class of people that the foreigner imagines.

The French nature is precocious. Imagination wakes early in the boy. An English lad, bent on his sports and generously expending his physical energy, does not want sexually exciting reading—or any reading. He thinks of winning at cricket or boating, and is constantly active in the open air. His mind is not at all on the Greek philosophers they din in his ears, and less than not at all upon the other sex, of whom no one talks in his presence. But the French boy is no sooner out of petticoats than he begins to dream of adventures he will later on realize. Meantime he excites and gratifies his fancy by reading descriptions, with stimulating details, of the pursuit and easy conquest of womankind. The student is the real amateur of the literature that gives us such bad fame, and after him the foreigner. The wretched works have a great sale in Berlin and elsewhere; and we become a byword, which we might retort upon our critics by telling them that it is they much more than we who encourage these effusions. We are not deceived

as to their character. We know just how much of "French life" the authors portray—life sketched from the midnight activities of bars and cafés. Any reality they attain to is limited by their stereotyped setting of universal debauchery. But they interest the foreigners, who buy them largely, not knowing how little reality they contain, and they excite the students who are already fevered with desire. The real public despises them, and does not read them. I once saw a man of whose easy morals and varied tastes I was aware refuse one of these books with an air of great boredom. "You don't care for that sort of thing?" I asked him. "They weary me to death," he answered. "What good are they, when there is life itself?" He had been out of school a long time.

These painful productions do not represent a taste of the French nation. They demonstrate a need of money on the part of certain Frenchmen, who are no more to be considered typical of the people than are our sharpers and assassins.

But this kind of writing aside, there does run through all French literature a vein of licentiousness. The fact is indisputable. No less true is it that it is pervaded in all its periods by a garrulous flippancy, an audacious assumption of the right to challenge all dogma, all that is supposedly venerable, whether in religion, government, or the affairs of love. Rabelais, besides recounting a great quantity of indecencies, dangerously attacked the

principle of authority. His indecencies are of the closet sort, the amusement of the scholar and philologue who juggles words while maintaining a perfect coolness of temper. The zest all lies in the attack, in the game—for him, and for all other Frenchmen as well.

Tell a Frenchman "Hands off!" and you have said enough to make him lay hold at once, and with no reverent touch. In the traditionally sacred he by constitution scents a tyranny; and that he has hated from the time when Étienne de la Boétie wrote "Contre Un," and a good while before. His sacrilegious humour amounts to a destiny; for when to the nations were portioned out their separate offices in the world-economy, the French were told: "Immobility is death; beware lest aught become corrupted through inaction. Here is your province!"

The Frenchman cannot allow that any fixed and permanent forms and values should impose upon his respect and hamper his action. He intends not to be dominated by anything, no matter what, because it makes a pretence to being of the stuff of eternity instead of moving as life moves. He treats everything lightly, for nothing is serious to him compared with his mission of turning the wheel for the ideas that move the world. He has always produced literature of an audacious character, not that he is particularly depraved, but that he may not take sensuality too seriously, and suffer it to distract him from his mission.

Let us see what is the character of this literature.

It does not partake of the emotion that is fervid, earnest, and deeply disquieting, shaking soul and body with its power. Instead it is presided over by a mocking smile, laughter and a fire of raillery pierce it; its indecencies are not sombre and poignant, but comic and ludicrous. It jeers and gibes, now rudely, now with subtlety. This is the indecency of the *fabliaux* and of the historiettes of Queen Margaret of Navarre, who was quite capable of powerful emotion, as La Fontaine tells us in his sprightly verse, that of a true poet:

> " Cette belle âme si hardie
> Qui pleura tant après Pavie."

This is the indecency of the eighteenth century *conteurs*, so evidently undisturbed by the figures they bandy about. Here the licentiousness is a sort of academic mannerism, quite conventional in phraseology, and very little direct. It is the same in Voltaire—dry, detached, secretly hostile even to the subjects of his audacity, and never for a moment handling them with his sensibilities. These authors never appear to draw upon their own memories or sensations. Their incident, their methods of delineation and development are all artificial, and conformed to a fixed type to which each individual contributes merely some nuances without breaking with established forms. Their libertinism is largely literary servility; they appear to set themselves to adroit imitation, not to yield to an impulse to say something of their own. And all of them preserve toward their theme the same

attitude of mockery, avowed or insinuated; their laughter is unceasing, whether loud or smothered, whether malicious or kindly.

To be able to laugh shows a sort of disinterestedness—some attention left over from the subject immediately in hand. The copious and persistent laughter of our scabrous literature—not the squalid productions I have spoken of, written for exportation and devoid of significance, but the work of our great artists, the monuments of our literary history—gives ample proof of mental disinterestedness. It divorces from sensuality the element of pathos, and puts it in a place of secondary importance. Our literature is rich in the sprightly and facetious; but books of sombre and profound voluptuosity are very rare in it. Moreover, such books have always come either from writers of foreign origin, or from Frenchmen whose minds were temporarily or permanently unhinged. Rousseau is the true sensualist, and of his madness there can be no doubt. St. Beuve wrote a novel called "Volupté"—a title well justified, though more chaste adventure was never seen, and his book is a product of inward disorder and torment, a marvellous pathology of desire restrained. There are some modern performances full of true sensuality; but I think a physician could tell you of the authors that they betrayed less a tendency of French literature than a bad inward state of the individual In France no one but a hypochondriac displays the gloomy violence which is the true mark of sensuality —the sane, by their continuous raillery, never

become prey to a mental obsession. Whatever rank luxuriance of detail they allow themselves, they are always objective, always far enough away from the thing itself that their work makes the impression of a literary exercise, a purely mental operation.

If the Frenchman were what they say he is, how could he support such flippancy? How could he endure the spectacle furnished him at certain of our theatres? His nerves would revolt against the brutal and blatant appeal to his profoundest instincts. Whereas he tolerates both books and theatre and enjoys them, because he does not take them with great seriousness. Even while his thoughts play among the images presented him, he remains his own master, they exert no hypnotic power. His consuming passion, his true desires, are for him, as for his own Rabelais, founded in the idea, far, far away from the flesh and quite beyond himself. What these passions are has been plain in his history. Of a truth he loves pleasure; he loves yet more the setting of it: the satisfaction of his vanity, the intellectual gratification received from contrasts which multiply and enrich his impressions; situations he always loves, and all play of mental ingenuity. Could women dress so well, or men flatter so delicately, in a materialistic country? That Frenchwomen invented the art of the toilette and Frenchmen that of gallantry can only be because in France, to excite the nerves, one must operate through the mind.

And in England? Let us remember that Hobbes and Locke were English. Taine said of the former: "Out of sensation and desire he has evolved all human passions, human duties, and human institutions." Locke said: "Perception through the sense is the basis of all knowledge." All the English are practising disciples of Hobbes and Locke, even without reading them. Sensation is their schoolmistress, and her rule over the consciousness is absolute. Yet they are not aware of their sensations in general, and those of love in particular they have a horror of formulating—unlike the Latin races, who value nothing until it is clothed in words. The English respect their sensations as at once a mystery and a revelation too sacred for any but the discreetest allusion, made, as it were, with the head averted and the face veiled, in the manner of some ancient artist shaping the image of a redoubtable deity.

This is why there is no pornographic literature in England. But every book of actual merit betrays evident sensuality, and in works of genius it abounds. It cries out in every line of Shakespeare; less in the lovers' dialogue than in the lust of cruelty and blood-letting, the search for gruesome or horrible figures, the sublime savagery and relish of brutality. When the heroes of Shakespeare tear out eyes and grind them under heel, stab the dead, dwell avidly upon images of horror, see ghosts covered with mortal wounds, it is not so much English cruelty they are evidencing as another quality. Does not the drama of the Restoration discover a sensuality

bursting the harsh restraints of Puritanism with a violence nowhere else paralleled? Some of the plays are modelled upon the French, and how unlike French plays they are too! Take "The Plain Dealer," by Wycherly, and observe with what frankness the unbridled instincts gush out. Plays of this sort were written to the taste of the fair ladies of the Restoration, who made a morning pastime of executions. Going to see Cromwell disinterred and hanged at Tyburn is scarcely a diversion for chaste tempers!

But those free times are far away. A rigid moral discipline is now the ambition—and the achievement—of every self-respecting Englishman. Propriety reigns. Suggestive speech and unbecoming topics are barred. But—instinct survives. It must find out other avenues of self-expression than in the days of Wycherly, but it does get itself expressed nevertheless—and how wonderfully!

Most English novels are crystal-pure. Young girls may read them and recount all their incident without a blush, for it scarcely ever transcends maidenly experience. The young girls understand every word—everything except the warm inexpressible melancholy the most admired of books leave in their wake. Whence does it come, that feeling of expectant restlessness? For the story did not always end badly, and there seemed nothing mysterious about it. Whence, indeed?

Charlotte Brontë, purest of womankind, describes

in " Villette " her bitter life of exile. She shows us a small girl in love with a boy of fifteen years, a coltish, egotistic, good-natured schoolboy, who half-tenderly bustles and teases her, and tries to distract her loneliness. Nothing could be more innocent than the recital of the insignificant actions, the stammering speech and pretty ways of the six-year-old maiden. And never elsewhere have I seen traced with a firmer hand the lines of the awakening sex instinct. The sweet little episode is more strangely troubled and troubling, nearer to poignant reality, than a tale of Crébillon. Poor Miss Brontë, she would have been shocked to hear that her books contain almost pathologically correct observation upon subjects she could never consciously have thought about.

In the unforgettable Maggie Tulliver, George Eliot surely intended to create an undisciplined and freedom-loving spirit, brought under the yoke of reality and crushed by it. Did she suspect what else she revealed to its deepest depth—the operation of a sensuality burning as hot and clear as ever Othello's ? Maggie Tulliver's sin was innocence itself: she let herself be carried off by the betrothed of her cousin—an elopement consisting in a boat-ride, some conversation, and then a separation; no more than this, but all pervaded and convulsed by the storms, shot through by the lightning flashes, of an emotion quite other than spiritual. No word is said of the true essence of the emotion—none needs to be said. Explicitness would have created the reaction almost certain to be caused by

books that set out with premeditation to stir us up. All that is described is the moral attitude of a creature launched and conducted, if ever creature was, by the great instinct. Every action, every word, utters it; no need for the artist to express it, or to perceive it herself. And neither did she, for it expressed itself despite her, like the primeval force of the race which she interprets.

Whence comes that hot and languorous air, like a sirocco, that breathes in the profound and beautiful books of Thomas Hardy? Why do even his landscapes, as seen through the eyes of some of his heroes, trouble our senses more than the complicated anecdote, the romantic ornament, the rhetorical and pompous devilry of a Barbey d'Aurevilly?

Ann Veronica, the heroine of a late novel by H. G. Wells, is a healthy, vigorous, and rational young woman, bent on "living her own life," by which she means being unhampered by preconceived ideas in her development and her actions. Trouble naturally results: her whole life, both inwardly and outwardly, is affected by her principle of action as her correct, affectionate, and placid fiancé could never have affected it. Her intellectual ambitions, her hunger for moral liberty, are, of course, nothing else than unsatisfied desire. Read the fine scene where Ann Veronica discovers her amorous predilections on seeing a blond and sun-kissed down upon the cheek of her professor of biology. Nothing, I should say, clearer, more powerful, or more terrible, has ever been written. Or take the scene where a

mature and ardent man confesses his passion to the young girl as they sit listening to Tristan and Isolde. Ann Veronica has already chosen the biologist; but the awakening of love, far from isolating or protecting her, makes her more freely responsive, so that the longing even of a man she does not care for cannot leave her indifferent. She resists him, but what sensations secretly mingle with her virtuous rebuff! Read these wonderful pages, not a line of which could shock the most rigid moralist, and see if they do not set up in your nervous system the same thrill as would the sight of a burst artery spouting blood. And after them, by way of comparison, open some novel of D'Annunzio, painstakingly shading in all his half-tones of lubricity, and not achieving anything at all, except that D'Annunzio writes very, very well, though rather at length. As for Ann Veronica, I could not tell whether it is well written or not. It does not seem to be written at all, for one gets no impression as from a work of art, but instead as of an amazing reality. You seem to have touched the formidable mystery of physical sensation; and the mood this induces is no light one.

The Frenchman talks incessantly of his sense emotions, in order to free his mind of their images. He constantly mocks them, obstinately refusing to grant their underlying element of tragedy. He will not be subdued by them; he insists upon preserving his mental independence—the only inde-

pendence to him important. By mockery he can throw off their domination, belittle them, detract from their dignity. His perpetual allusion is a subtle weapon. The people who live not for themselves but for others, and, above all, for the idea, cannot afford to be slaves of the body. They must treat it like a child, whom one pretends to take seriously, but who must in the high and serious or the passionate affairs of life, of course, be brushed aside.

But the English—they never smile at the emotions of the senses; they accord them the reverence due to that which occupies the place of importance. They do not speak of them directly, they seem to ignore their existence, but not in the least because they wish to escape their influence. Why should they ? The general is not their preoccupation, their mania. They live for themselves, their ideas are simply the slow aftermath of their sensations, and, of course, take rank second to these, which appear so much more serious, so much more worthy of respect—and of silence. It is natural that the English should be instinctively less hostile than we to the enslavement of material pleasures, also natural that they should not need to resort to our tricks of cynicism and the boasting pretence of wickedness in order to maintain their mental independence. They do not need mental independence—they have other endowments more useful to their genius.

But that, for all their prudery, their discreet and exquisite reserve, they love their bodies with a fervent love and reverence their appetites as sacred,

while we French entertain for ours a sincere indifference and bantering disdain; that though all the while we seem to deal as royally with our senses as Haroun Al Raschid dealt with Abou Hassan, we yet heap inward scorn upon them, and relegate them to a place somewhere below our intellectual curiosities, our ambitions, our vanities, and our enthusiasms; that we suffer them to make upon our memories no indelible print; that, finally, we, verbally audacious as we are, are the true ascetics, and the frigid, correct, and secret English the sensualists, ah, acknowledge it, dear English friends!

CHAPTER VI

FAIR PLAY

"TROILUS. When many times the captive Grecian falls
Even in the fan and wind of your fair sword,
You bid them rise and live.
HECTOR. O! 'tis fair play."

FAIR play is commonly translated in French by *franc jeu*—which is not perfectly satisfactory. *Franc jeu* suggests audacity, good faith, and a degree of self-revelation; whereas fair play is always reserved, brave rather than boastful, and honourable rather than simply honest. Honourable means conformable to the law of honour, which imposes the recognition of the rights of the adversary.

Franc jeu may be intelligently egotistic; fair play is always chivalrous. The former is pride seeking a personal satisfaction in the risk it runs; the latter is pride in the respect felt for its adversary. The sense of honour, the instinct for magnanimous action, may be found anywhere; but the crystallization of that sense into a familiar ideal, which, without bombast or affectation, permeates the minor activities of life and all the tissues of habit, becoming, as it were, a pocket aspiration of the people—this is distinctly English.

Froissart very well appreciated the meaning of

fair play, citing many instances of its operation. I resort to him in the conviction that I could give no more convincing evidence.

On December 31, 1348, King Edward III fought all day beneath the citadel of Calais, which his enemies had tried to take by treachery. He constantly encountered in the fray Sir Eustache de Ribaumont, a very brave French knight, who twice brought the English sovereign to his knees. Victory rested at the close of the day with the English. Eustache de Ribaumont was taken by the King himself, to whom he gave up his sword, believing him to be a simple knight. That evening King Edward gave a mighty feast, to which the captives were bid and sumptuously treated. After the banquet the King approached Sir Eustache de Ribaumont, and taking off a chaplet of pearls which he wore, gave it to him, saying "joyously," as Froissart has it: "Sir Eustache, I give you this chaplet for the best doer in arms this journey past of either party, and I desire you to bear it this year for the love of me. I know well ye be fresh and amorous, and oftentimes be among ladies and damosels. Say wheresoever ye come that I did give it you, and I quit you your prison and ransom, and ye shall depart to-morrow, if it please you."

Such was the courtesy of the King; flattering alike to the warlike pride of the knight and the vanity of the handsome boy, for we guess Sir Eustache to have been that, and to have taken pleasure in it.

What frankness, what graciousness toward a man whom, after all, he had fought all day, and who had twice forced him to his knees! It was certainly this fact in particular that made the English King show his opponent a favour so delicate and full of esteem. He could not, you see, have weakened before any but a worthy foe—one who had proven himself the stronger before giving up the sword and displayed a resistance glorious in the offerin and the overcoming alike. With his praise and h pearls King Edward raised the knight to the heig of his own pride, thereby augmenting the sa And finally, he evinced the taste of a connois for the risk gaily run and the game gallantly pla The incident is a perfect example of fair play.

Another. Bartholomew de Burghersch, barc England, was besieging the castle of Cour defended by Sir Henry de Vaux, a knight of Cha pagne, in the name of the Archbishop of Rheims. The castle held out stoutly, having thick walls an a high square tower, and Sir Henry had no fears But Bartholomew de Burghersch, seeing he could n take the castle, bethought him to lay a mine u the great tower, in such a way that the eart tunnelled through from one side to the oth well propped, and it needed no more than to powder and fuse and strike the tinder for the to fall. Then Messer Bartholomew, on horseb rode before the great gate and made sign for a par Sir Henry de Vaux appeared on the battlem and asked his errand. "I want you to surrende replied Sir Bartholomew, "or you will all infallibly

destroyed." The French knight began to laugh, for he felt quite safe. "Messer Henry, Messer Henry," said the English knight, "if you were truly informed what your situation is, you would surrender instantly, without more words." He proposed that Sir Henry come out, upon assurance of his safety, to see what he had to show him. Sir Henry, having, with reason, confidence in the English, thereupon came out; was conducted to the mine, and seeing that his great tower was only supported by props of wood, he surrendered. As soon as all the garrison was outside, Sir Bartholomew set fire to the mine, and the tower was rent in two, and fell to the ground. Having carried out this practical joke, Sir Bartholomew said to Sir Henry: "Now see if I did not tell you the truth." "I own it, sir," replied he, "and we remain prisoners at your pleasure. We also return you our best thanks for your kindness to us; for if the Jacques, who formerly overran this country, had had the same advantage over us that you have, they would not have acted so generously."

He was perfectly right—that Sir Henry de Vaux. The Jacques Bonhomme of all time have been ignorant of the first principles of "fair play."

One more instance of what fair play was capable of in the fourteenth century, and to some extent is still capable of to-day. After the Battle of Poitiers, the English, says Froissart, "those that had taken prisoners, asked what they could pay for their

ransoms without much hurting their fortunes; and willingly believed whatever they told them; for they had declared publicly that they did not wish to deal harshly with any knight or squire that his ransom should be so burdensome as to prevent his following the profession of arms, or advancing his fortune." He adds, this man of much information, that the custom of the Germans was not so kind; that they had no pity for anyone who fell in their hands, but exacted all his fortune or more, as ransom; and kept him in bondage and fetters, in the straitest prisons, to the end of extorting still greater sums.

I have been taxed with anglomania. This is why I quote the above paragraph, to forestall the objection that the spirit of chivalry was universal in the fourteenth century, and that every nation had its periods of such glorious magnanimity. Froissart reassures me in my scepticism on this point.

These, then, are the large lines of fair play as laid down by the good chronicler: exaltation of merit in an opponent, all honourable pains to "give him his chance," and moderation after the victory. Fair play is thus a product of English slowness, common sense, and pride.

First, as to English slowness. It is the reverse of the mental vivacity which marks the peoples of the South, to whom one hears traditionally imputed the instinct of treachery. Why do they naturally fight in dark corners, strike from ambush, and deal

in secret revenge? I think partly because their lively intelligence urges them to poke their noses into everything, but chiefly because their temperament makes them picture their opponents in a certain way to themselves. Directly an interest of theirs is threatened, they feel a keen consciousness of the person opposing them, they see not only the opposition but the opposer, and are keenly aware of the difference between themselves and him. Liking means seeing likenesses between ourselves and others, and to see unlikeness is to hate, whether it be the ephemeral hostility that lasts during a game of tennis, or a permanent rivalry in love or ambition. You recognize your opposite in the person who offensively limits your activities; the unlikeness is palpable, you are sensible of his standing between you and the world, and blotting out the universe. His presence, his will, and the things you feel him doing against you, amount to an obsession which pervades you morally and materially, and which you must at all costs break down and do away with. The necessity is so compelling that you cannot bear the idea of defeat; and so you fight in the way that risks least, and not with your face uncovered and the chances as even as possible. Your antipathy and scorn, sprung from the feeling of unlikeness, are so strong that you employ treachery to aid you, because with its help you are more likely to win. Treachery does not necessarily proceed from cowardice. It may be the result of the extreme intensity you bend upon the suppression of unendurable presentments of hostility.

The Englishman has no such swift mentality. He knows himself, but he will not spend time or effort to find out where others differ from him. He sooner sees where they are like him—they are all, for instance, human beings! He generally sticks to this attitude; and even if he concerns himself, displays some curiosity and takes measures to gratify it, his first instinct has been to invest his opponent with his own dignity, his own rights, needs, and weaknesses, everything which constitutes the common endowment of humanity. He respects himself in his enemy.

It would be putting the case fairly to say that the Englishman conducts the battle of life not like a civil war, but like a war with a foreign foe. In civil war the struggle is less to gain a point than to satisfy private rancours. The fight is for an idea, against an enemy who confronts you with differences which you know too precisely to think of with sympathy or even justice. His difference from you —your ground, that is, for hating him—is so clear and so much in evidence as to prevent your seeing any kinship, and you will hesitate at no means of destroying him. For could you dominate him if you conquered him? Could you forgive him if he conquered you?

In war with a stranger, one fights either because one is ordered to fight—in which case one is indifferent to the enemy—or out of patriotism, which can inspire temporarily a savage fury, but is capable next minute of disinterested generosity; or, finally, for the mere love of it and of danger, for the thrill

of the life-and-death struggle. In none of these cases is one blinded by the fierce and bitter personal venom which is ruthless in its methods, does not know any bounds, is never sobered by victory, nor satisfied with any degree of violence.

War with the stranger leaves free the mind of a man toward his adversary; it gives openings for sentiments of chivalry. In a word, it is more like sport, in suggesting disinterested and noble methods.

In the Latin countries, competition for power, for position, for an ideal or a system, always tends to take the form of civil war. A man is less conscious of his end than of his adversary, and seizes like a flash upon the temperamental reasons which, as well as the circumstances, have set them in opposition. That he should fail seems less intolerable than that his adversary should win, and thus the ruin of the latter becomes his real objective. The sense of rivalry is frantic in a quick mind.

With the deliberate Englishman it is different. He can well bear to have others before him. He does not care to win—or do anything else—quickly. He wants to win, and he is sure he will. If he must strike, he does so, with the practical aim of clearing his path, not out of a furious desire to annihilate his enemy. Not having analyzed his obstacles, he does not hate them, he has in mind merely to gain his end; and, with his eyes upon the goal, he does what is necessary to reach it, granting at the same time that his adversary has a right to prevent him if he can. The victory will be to the stronger or to the more skilful—that is as it should be. If he win, he will be

friendly; if he lose he will still be proud. He does not look into the soul of the other man—the fight is the thing, not the person with whom one fights. Hector let the Greek rise and fight again, after having him in his power; for he was incurious about such disparities between them as would have compelled his hate. He made his adversary, in a sort, another Hector, and expanded his own life in letting him live. And here we touch upon the pride which is so large an element of fair play.

The Englishman loves an honourable fight, for he values above all his own good opinion. He would be splendid both in triumph and in defeat; and the knowledge that he owed either to underhand methods would revolt his pride, no matter how favourable the public view of his action. Thus he likes his opponent to be of consequence, and will exalt his merit, because in so doing he exalts his own. He treats the loser most honourably, for that enhances the glory of the victory.

Having fought according to rule, he is not humiliated by defeat—or, rather, he can hardly be said to have suffered defeat, as long as he is satisfied with his own actions. He never puts blame on others, and manfully accepts the consequences of his own lack of intelligence, address, method—everything excepting lack of energy, for that he is never without.

Effort of any sort commands his respect—even effort directed against himself. Remember how the English spoke of the Boers in that war whose successive disasters put their nobility in mourning and gave their pride such grievous shocks. That was

fair play. So is their attitude in political strife. Their liveliest passions are in play, yet rarely do they condescend to the vilification that elsewhere, alas! is too rife. In demolishing a principle, a theory, or a system, they do not attack individuals, and make in general no incursions into the private lives of their public enemies. "If you have not attacked persons, you have done nothing to controvert opinions," says Joseph de Maistre. No Englishman could have said that; it is against the principles of fair play, which they practice in the great and small affairs of life. If one of themselves transgresses its laws, the others feel contempt. You can see this, when at the mere mention of some individual they become suddenly frigid. You suppose the person to be guilty of infamy such as may not be spoken of, and you find that he has simply committed a series of moral inelegances, contracted a habit of not "fighting fair."

Fair play embodies all that is profoundly Christian in their moral system. Is it not fair play to give the guilty a chance to redeem himself? They regularly do that. Pardon is likewise fair play. Hobbes says: "Why is it beautiful to pardon? Because it is a proof of confidence in oneself." The words are Hobbes's, not mine. When they refuse to demolish an enemy by the use of methods which are strictly regular, but not lofty—that is fair play. When they refrain from telling the worst they know even of someone they hate, because they will not take an advantage he himself gave them—again fair play. To recognize the rights of others, to respect their

efforts, and for oneself to rely simply on strength, energy, and will-power, without resort to devices of mental subtlety; to win or lose serenely, without hate or rancour; to see his humanity in every man—that is English fair play.

It has its relapses. One can occasionally find it wanting. A singular instance is the subject of Jeanne d'Arc. The English detest Jeanne d'Arc, and do their best to belittle her—they who profess a cult of Napoleon—after a hatred of him, it is true, but hatred of a grandeur worthy the man. When the "Jeanne d'Arc" of Anatole France appeared, I discussed it with several English people. All were enthusiastic, and all gave the same reason for it. I will sum up their opinion in the words of a man of great culture and breadth of view, a Roman Catholic as well. I was responding to what I took for literary enthusiasm for our great writer, when he interrupted me, with even a little irritation: "Yes, yes; but I mean less the artistic and stylistic achievement than the reasonable point of view, which sets everything in the right light and relieves the legend of its absurdity." His feeling must be the general one, for the publishers of the English version in their announcement spoke of Anatole France as the detractor of Jeanne d'Arc.

This is rather a surprising state of affairs. One would think no people more capable than the English of paying that pure and inspired spirit the homage which is her due. They who care so much

for disinterested heroism and understand it so well —why do they enjoy belittling our heroine, jeering at her, detracting from her greatness ? They know that England has better achieved her destiny than she could have while retaining France; and they bear no ill-will to the Burgundians for the injury they suffered at the end of the Hundred Years' War. But Jeanne d'Arc still rankles. Is it just because of St. Helena that they have forgiven Napoleon ? If so, the stake at Rouen ought to be enough for them. No, what they dislike in the miraculous history is precisely the miraculous. It seems to indicate that for once God was not on their side—a thing which even their sense of fair play could hardly be expected to stand !

Attack the English, even with the weapons of trickery, they will respond with frankness; conquer them, they will generously recognize your prowess; fall to them in fair fight, and they will treat you like heroes; rely on their honour in great things and small, you will rarely be deceived. But if you tell them—and facts seem to bear you out—that God is with you and not with them, you may find that their toleration for the rights, the glory, and the dreams of others has its limits; and those limits are, perhaps, just the tides of jade and silver that isolate England in their eternal embrace.

CHAPTER VII

RELIGION

"The human understanding, when it has once adopted an opinion (either as being the received opinion or as being agreeable to itself), draws all things else to support and agree with it."—BACON.

I SHOULD say that on the whole the English are religious. Their belief has force and sincerity; and even small cultivation of the things of the spirit tends to develop in them a passionate interest, a sort of virtuosity, as it were, in the objects and forms of faith. Many of them employ upon matters religious the liveliest mental curiosity they possess, and preserve in their personal belief an abiding capacity for fresh impressions. Their faith is to them not a stable monument, but a living plant, needing to be nipped and trimmed and trained in the way it should grow. It never gets fixed once for all, solidified into a permanent form without possibility of change or challenge. The English attitude towards religion is a mixture of certitude—for they, wellnigh alone, are on the right path—and of anxiety, for it is so easy to stray away.

There is much that is strong and beautiful in these operations of the English heart, the English mentality, and the English nervous system. And there

happily exists a most unusual little book—the "Father and Son"* of Mr. Edmund Gosse—which exhibits them with entire fidelity, and records a veritable case of English religious passion. This autobiographical fragment—a masterpiece of irony and acute observation—throws extraordinary light upon a little group of Puritan souls, and reflects with accuracy their characteristic zeal and rigidity, their sublime and ridiculous ideal of absolute purity, their harshness, their want of humanity, their insane pride. To read this book with care—and one cannot well read it otherwise—is to become instructed in the spiritual passions of the English soul, and its hidden and vehement instinct of revolt.

"Father and Son" is the history of an education. As such, stern though it is and totally devoid of all romantic incident, one reads it with fevered interest. How captivating, how illuminating, is this narrative of the half-unconscious yet desperate struggle of a little fragile boy to defend his inmost personality against the ferocious assaults of a religious fanatic—a man without bowels or reason in this one respect, though otherwise kind and of real intelligence.

The mother of Edmund Gosse was an educated woman, with an earnest nature and an indomitable will—traits clearly visible in the numerous quotations from her journals which are given in the book. She was gifted with imagination, but upon moral

* "Father and Son: A Study of Two Temperaments." London: W. Heinemann.

grounds wrestled perpetually with her natural endowment. As a child, she had diverted her brothers and her nurses with an inexhaustible flow of story-telling, until a Calvinistic governess was good enough to explain to her how reprehensible it is to trifle thus with unveracity. From that moment she told no more stories. Yet she could not summarily check the inventive play of her brain, and the self-imposed discipline became torture.

"I knew neither my corruption nor my weakness, nor did I know where to gain strength." She was at this time nine years old. "The simplicity of truth was not sufficient for me; I must needs embroider imagination upon it, and the folly, vanity, and wickedness which disgraced my heart are more than I am able to express. Even now (at the age of twenty-nine), though watched, prayed, and striven against, that is still the sin that most easily besets me. It has hindered my prayers and prevented my improvement, and therefore has humbled me very much."

All her life long Mrs. Gosse preserved this taste for crushing in herself the demands of instinct. "For it to dawn upon her consciousness that she wished for something was definitely to renounce that wish." One admires such force of character, but at the same time one trembles for the happiness of a little lad brought up by a mother so lacking in weaknesses.

"This Puritan in grain" had met him who became her husband at a gathering of religious souls. At once they—one does not dare say fell in love, that would be to speak with too great levity, but they understood each other, recognized themselves as

two souls bound upon the same errand, animated by the same passion. Each had religion for the engrossing aim of his existence; each accepted no other spiritual authority than that of the Saviour, of whom they were persuaded that they comprehended the most secret intentions, with whom they pursued an uninterrupted intercourse. All rites and ceremonies, all feasts and embellishments, seemed to them perversion. They tolerated no priest between them and their Lord. They wanted nothing but the Scriptures, and these formed matter for inexhaustible and fruitful research, even though from much reading they already knew them by heart from one end to the other. In later years Mr. Philip Gosse often said that "no small element in his wedded happiness had been the fact that he and his wife were of one mind in the interpretation of Sacred Prophecy." They interpreted continually. It was their one pleasure, their relaxation from the cares of the day. The interpretation of the Prophets took "in their economy the place which is taken in profaner families by cards or the piano."

Profoundly disdainful of the judgment of their fellow-men, they witnessed an absolute humility before the Divine will. "Their ejaculation in the face of any dilemma was, 'Let us cast it before the Lord.'" Upon their knees they addressed themselves to prayer, which at an end they acted unhesitatingly, sure that that which they did was imposed upon them by the will of God Himself.

In such a household the advent of a child was "not welcomed, but borne with resignation." Mr.

Gosse wrote in his diary that day: " E. delivered of a son. Received green swallow from Jamaica." Have I said that Mr. Gosse was a naturalist ?

The babe gave at first but faint signs of life. Without troubling themselves further they laid him upon a bed, while all anxiety and attention were concentrated upon the mother. Fortunately, however, an old woman happened to be present who, having nothing better to do, bethought her to try to animate the new-born. She succeeded, and was complimented by the doctor upon her cleverness. In after years, when Edmund Gosse heard the story, and wished to know the name of the woman to whom he owed his life, his father was not able to recall the affair with sufficient clearness to tell him who she was. The pious naturalist paid small attention to the petty details of this terrestrial existence.

It would nevertheless be a mistake to suppose that the child was neglected. At six weeks he was presented at a gathering of the saints, and there solemnly dedicated to the Lord. This was, I conclude, not a mere rite of baptism, but something much more explicit, consecrating the nurseling to a life of peculiar holiness, and laying upon him from his infancy the necessity of certain rigidly defined beliefs. It set him apart for salvation, and it had likewise the effect of isolating him completely throughout the whole of his gloomy childhood.

"We have given him to the Lord," writes his mother, " and we trust that He will really manifest him to be His own, if he grow up; and if the Lord take him early, we will not doubt that he is taken

to Himself. Only, if it please the Lord to take him, I do trust we may be spared seeing him suffer in lingering illness and much pain. But in this, as in all things, His will is better than what we can choose. Whether his life be prolonged or not, it has already been a blessing to us and to the saints, in leading us to much prayer, and bringing us into varied need and some trial." This is surely a somewhat austere fashion of envisaging the joys of maternity.

The surroundings of the growing child were dreary in the extreme. No one told him stories, for make-believe was a spiritual sin. No one played with him, for the time was too preciously employed in meriting salvation and interpreting the Prophets. Not until he was ten years old had Edmund any real acquaintance with other children. He did not know how to play. He did not know anything human, but he knew the Bible. Poor baby! the half-stifled condition of his first entrance into the world still continued, with, alas! no good old woman at hand to help him breathe. But the child had a gallant spirit of resistance. He opposed resiliency to compression. His powers were quickened instead of atrophied; he observed and passed judgment upon the smallest detail of things about him. And here it should be emphasized that this narrative is not at all a piece of imaginative literature composed by a master in the craft, but a faithful and precise record of definite recollections.

The child was once reproved because he prayed

to God to give him a top. He reflected upon the circumstance, and forthwith commenced his critique of the Supreme Being, the God of his father and mother, who was said to be continually bending over him and painfully attentive to all that might be going on in his mind—so mighty a God that a humble request for a top was an annoyance to Him. The child surmised that this God was not particularly well disposed towards him, and the longing to close with such a redoubtable adversary was constantly in his thoughts. He had heard a good deal said about idolators, and upon inquiry learned that these abandoned beings, instead of worshipping the one true God without mediatory images, were in the habit of "bowing down to wood and stone." Mr. Philip Gosse affirmed that the Most High "would be very angry, and would signify His anger, if anyone in a Christian country bowed down to wood and stone." And the child dedicated to the Lord and nourished upon the Holy Scriptures conceived upon the instant a singular plan, which he presently carried into effect. One fine, sunny morning, being alone in the house, he put a chair upon a table, knelt before it, and said his daily prayer, only substituting for the customary invocation the words "O Chair," delivered in loud and solemn tones. Then he gazed out of the window at so much of the sky as was visible between the housetops, and awaited the expected cataclysm. He was very much alarmed, but still more excited. Nothing happened—there was not a cloud in the sky, not an unusual noise in the street. Presently he was quite

sure that nothing would happen. He had committed idolatry, flagrantly and deliberately, and God did not care. . . . The little Edmund no longer believed that his father was really acquainted with the Divine practice in cases of idolatry.

Spoiled children—and others too—when they are left alone, upset the ink, stop the clock, or pilfer sweets. This one played at idolatry—such are the results of a sanctified education.

Mrs. Gosse suffered from a frightful malady which was eventually to kill her. In the midst of the most excruciating suffering her energy did not desert her. Yet when she was told that she must abandon all hope of recovery, and her husband urged her to confess her "joy" in the Lord, she replied: "I have peace, but not *joy*." Such a state of mind in a dying person shocked her husband, who returned more than once to the charge; but in vain, for the poor woman, human for once in her life, refused to be convinced. Yet there was, according to her son, no bitterness in her death; for "the thought that the Pope of Rome was doomed irradiated her dying hours with an assurance that was like the light of the Morning Star, the harbinger of the rising sun."

At the moment of death the dying one spoke for the last time. Addressing her husband, she said: "Take our lamb and walk with me!" The lamb—poor lamb!—was doomed for some time to walk upon the rough and narrow path where she had set

his feet. That cold and tenacious will, which already lay so heavily upon him, did not lift with her death.

After this bereavement the child's life became still more dismal. Nothing was changed, save that Mr. Gosse, who now lacked an audience for his daily exposition of the Prophecies, made the small Edmund act in this capacity. "Hand in hand they inspected the nations, to see whether they had the mark of Babylon in their foreheads." They looked for a good many other and similar things quite as difficult to find, the poor babe not comprehending a jot of the words that hurtled about his ears, but bravely parroting the phrases, and inveighing with all his puny might against the turpitude of Rome. He had small notions of what the Catholic Church might be, but "regarded it with a vague terror as a wild beast, the only good point about it being that it was very old and was soon to die." And when he thought, with intense vagueness, of the Pope, he used to shut his eyes tight and clench his fists. Naturally he had no idea why.

When Edmund was eight years old his father settled in a Devonshire village. There, by Divine favour, Mr. Gosse found a number of souls to whom, as to himself, religion was the great, all-absorbing interest, and practising without a minister the "independent study of the Bible." Of this little body, Mr. Gosse, without any formal invitation, undertook the direction.

To understand the surroundings of the child at this time one must read the lively and pungent sketches of the various "saints"-who thus assem-

bled in a room over a stable saturated with ammoniac odours, listening to Mr. Gosse while he preached the Word. The lad was always docile, outwardly the "lamb" of his vocation and a source of edification to the saints. But inwardly he must very clearly have adopted a critical attitude toward his surroundings.

So much piety did not in fact agree with his health. He was delicate, high-strung, and sickly. We have seen the resignation with which his mother anticipated his early death; his father practised assiduously the same attitude. At every prayer-meeting the little Edmund heard the author of his being raise a voice to heaven—that pleasant baritone which Mr. Gosse himself, it appears, rather liked to hear—protesting his acquiescence in the early removal of his infant from earthly activities, as a particular sign of Divine favour. It is no great encouragement to a sickly child to hear that his premature death will be a source of pride to his relatives—the "child of many prayers" certainly did not digest his food the better for the performance.

He lived uncomfortably, under perpetual menace of the Divine wrath, the imminence of which every incident of daily life served to remind him. Once during the long prayer which Mr. Gosse nightly made at his son's bedside a beetle appeared on the coverlid. Edmund screamed, whereat the exasperated parent remarked in awesome tones: "If your heart were fixed, if it panted after the Lord, it would take more than the movements of a beetle to make you disturb oral supplication at His footstool.

Beware ! for God is a jealous God, and He consumes them in wrath who make a noise like a dog."

Poor little man ! far from making a noise like a dog. he never made the noise of a normal child. But his repressed sensibilities found vent in nightmares, in feverish and nervous terrors. He was constantly falling ill, and his illnesses were always received by his father with the pious wish that the affliction " might be much sanctified to him." And the child envied the lot of those ignored by the Deity, who were perfectly well and never knew the privileges of saving grace.

One Christmas, despite the prohibition of Mr. Gosse, who looked upon the celebration of the feast as an impiety, the servants secretly concocted a pudding, and gave a slice to the little boy. As he had lived mostly on gruel up to that time, such strong diet presently caused him acute distress and accordingly an intolerable remorse. Beside himself with spiritual and bodily anguish, he burst into his father's study, crying out: " Oh, papa, papa, I have eaten of the flesh offered to idols !" It did not occur to Mr. Gosse to offer him camomile. Getting up abruptly, he demanded: "Where is the accursed thing ?" Taking his son by the hand he ran with him to the kitchen, seized the rest of the pudding, and flung it into the ash-heap with incredible violence.

Mr. Gosse loved his son tenderly. He gave striking proof of his love in procuring his admission

to the number of those who "broke bread"—a thing not achieved without difficulty. In order to break bread with the saints it was necessary to be baptized by immersion, and to win the title to such a baptism—the only kind that availed for salvation—there had to be a definite conversion. Without conversion, even a pure and perfect life counted for nothing. Conversion was an event which came about without warning, unawares. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the way of salvation was revealed, and with the depths of one's being troubled and transformed, with the spirit aglow, one flung oneself into the path of righteousness. But Edmund had known no such moving experience, and his father was thus in some perplexity. However, having advised with the Lord, he saw that there might be exceptions to the rule, and that his son must be one of these. The Holy Spirit had doubtless worked within him since his birth, and the permanent miracle had been performed. Had he not been instructed by a father and mother to whom the will of the Lord was familiar matter? Had he not from his very cradle been unspotted from the world, and so responsive to the call of Christ that his conversion might be supposed to have occurred subconsciously, and thus taken for granted? Upon these premises the baptism duly took place. Edmund bore himself with inward satisfaction. He was so pleased with his new dignity that after the ceremony he stuck out his tongue at the other boys to show his scorn of the vulgar herd unbidden to break bread with the saints.

They put him to school presently, with instructions to testify for his Lord "in season and out of season." That is to say, it was his duty to stop his schoolmates after lessons, and inquire of them if they had found Jesus. He shrank from the task, and in order not to disobey flatly he shunned his fellow-pupils and lived in solitude. The critical spirit grew unconsciously stronger every day, as can be seen from a singular dialogue which took place one day between the father and son, as follows. Mr. Gosse announced to his son that he was about to marry again. As soon as he had asked and heard the name of his future mother, the boy inquired earnestly: "'But, papa, is she one of the Lord's children?" "Certainly," replied Mr. Gosse. Edmund persisted: "Has she taken up her cross in baptism?" meaning that baptism by immersion to which Mr. Gosse attached such vital importance. The grave Puritan faltered, and the boy, sitting up in bed, shook a finger at his father, and said: "Papa, don't tell me that she's a pedobaptist?" Mr. Gosse did not realize that his son was making fun of him; very likely the boy did not know it himself at the time. That came later.

The prayers, the restraints, the exhortations, the mortification of the flesh, grew continually more wearisome. A spirit of antagonism sprang up toward that implacable judgment which devoted nearly all of the human race to the everlasting bonfire simply for its failure to believe in the precise

manner prescribed by a narrow sect. At length, in his early manhood, the lad became conscious of his own doubts. He asked himself what could be the purpose of God in revealing His holy truth to a little group of villagers, and concealing it from millions of disinterested and pious theologians. The incongruity of the position, the self-righteous, self-sufficient attitude of those about him, developed in that keen mind an aptitude for precision and a taste for liberal thought. His powers of satire and his craving for freedom spread and sought their outlet. As yet he was a prisoner of early habits and conventions, which formed an apparently solid wall about him. But the wall was only painted plaster, and it was beginning to crack.

When Edmund was sixteen years old his father became occupied, and occupied his son, with a new idea, calculated, one can see, to lend a charming animation to their life. Mr. Gosse, delving in the Scriptures, had discovered that the coming of the Lord was at hand. "He would suddenly appear, without the least warning, and would catch up to be with Him in everlasting glory all whom acceptance of the Atonement had sealed for immortality. These were, on the whole, not numerous, and our belief was that the world, after a few days' amazement at the total disappearance of these persons, would revert to its customary habits of life, merely sinking more rapidly into a moral corruption due to the removal of these souls of salt." All this was to happen immediately. It was a subject of conversation in the family, where they spoke of it as

of an approaching trip to the country. Sometimes when they parted for the night, Mr. Gosse would say to his son, with a sparkling rapture in his eyes: "Who knows? We may meet next in the air, with all the cohorts of God's saints!" The boy, reconciled to the situation, suggested that it was not worth the trouble to go back to school. "Let me be with you when we rise to meet the Lord in the air!" However, they sent him back.

Mr. Gosse never realized his hope of being snatched into the skies. He lived for nearly a quarter of a century after the time when he made up his mind that such would be the mode of his release from a sinful world, always expecting the longed-for consummation, and never faltering in the belief that he would not be called upon to "taste death." His last hours were embittered by the necessity of dying in the usual way, which he held to be a scanty reward of his long faith and patience.

Edmund, as I said, went back to school, prepared for the final leave-taking. And there was a leave-taking of a sort, though not to set him among the cohorts of God's saints. One afternoon after his return he was alone in a study at the top of the house. He had been reading a good deal of Greek poetry, and was in a mood of powerful exaltation. The day was remarkably fine, like that on which he had made his prayer to the chair. There was absolute silence, all Nature seemed in suspense, waiting upon a coming event. Suddenly a great emotion filled the heart of the young man. The sublime hour was at hand. He felt it; he cried:

"Come now, Lord Jesus! Come now and take me to be for ever with Thee in Thy Paradise. I am ready to come. My heart is purged from sin; there is nothing that keeps me rooted to this wicked world. Oh, come now, now!" He raised himself and leaned upon the window-sill, thrilling with transcendent emotion. After a moment he felt a faint shame at the theatrical attitude he had adopted. Yet he still waited. The silence and the still outer air were troubled by a faint breath that stirred the leaves and made them rustle. Evening was coming on. He heard the distant voices of his fellows returning home. The tea-bell rang. . . . "The Lord has not come; the Lord will never come," murmured the young man. All the edifice of his faith began to totter and crumble. This was the end. From that moment he and his father walked with "the thick o' the world" between them. He was still outwardly submissive. He read the Bible with increasing boredom; he discussed theology. Then one day, in exasperation, he claimed the right of thinking for himself; he demanded to be left in peace. The book leaves off at this rupture, which must have been terrible, and upon the details of which Mr. Gosse is silent.

It would be indiscreet to inquire whether he has retained anything of that religion, of which he says: "It divides heart from heart. It sets up a vain, chimerical ideal, in the barren pursuit of which all the tender, indulgent affections, all the genial play of life, all the exquisite pleasures and soft resignations of the body, all that enlarges and calms the

soul, are exchanged for what is harsh and void and negative. It encourages a stern and ignorant spirit of condemnation, it throws altogether out of gear the healthy movement of the conscience, it invents virtues which are sterile and cruel, it invents sins which are no sins at all, but which darken the heaven of innocent joy with futile clouds of remorse. There is something horrible, if we will bring ourselves to face it, in the fanaticism that can do nothing with this pathetic and fugitive existence of ours, but treat it as if it were the uncomfortable ante-chamber to a palace which no one has explored, and of the plan of which we know absolutely nothing. My father, it is true, believed that he was intimately acquainted with the form and furniture of this habitation, and he wished me to think of nothing else but of the advantages of an eternal residence in it."

Mr. Gosse's father was without doubt an essentially unreasonable man. You read his story with exasperation, and take a vindictive pleasure in having fun at his expense. And yet . . . there is a certain beauty—of a strange, monstrous, defiant kind, but none the less beauty—in that proud confidence, that tranquil certitude of having communication direct with God, that serene scorn of natural laws, that futile but ardent play of the spirit among sacred mysteries. It shows too much passion not to have something grand about it. And it shows, too, how wise the English are in the restraints they impose upon themselves—their cold correctness of manner, their absence of emotion, their unreflective acceptance of conventions—and how right,

too, in thinking as little as possible! For let them once abandon themselves to a fanatic ideal, let them lose their firm grasp of the solid facts of life—and to what strange extremes are they brought!

Mr. Edmund Gosse has revealed to us with extraordinary convincingness what the religious idea can accomplish in the brains of his compatriots. The types he presents are not frequent to-day; but they are so clear-cut, so vigorous, as to form the best sort of guide for our present task, which is the exploration of a wide and singular tract of the English soul.

Every nation has one supreme and peculiar interest, one dominating national ideal. Ours is a lively horror of inequality, compounded with a like amount of taste for that same inequality, an itch to arrive at the highest rung of the ladder, materially, morally, and socially, and to prevent everybody below us from reaching it. In this struggle most of our secret instincts reveal themselves. Now it is in their religious attitude that the English are most self-revealing. In all other relations of life they show themselves independent, resourceful, and liberty-loving. In their religious life they are these and something more—they are uneasy.

For there is a great restlessness in the English soul. It is not mental restlessness, not nerves, not the intellectual curiosity with which we are beset. It is an emotional disturbance, a craving. They need certainty—a need which is, as it were, the

moral aspect of their need of action. They cannot handle the subject effectively; it means too much to them. They cannot concur unreflectingly in accepted dogmas, they have no instinct for submission, and they are incapable of living without a sublime ideal. Thus their religion becomes the tender spot in their stout hearts.

An English author has defined their inward state as "that attitude of difficulty and combat which, for us others, is always associated with the Faith." And the same brilliant writer, who possesses, it seems, spiritual independence as well as a vein of irony, says farther on: "Those who believe nothing, but only think and judge, cannot understand that of its nature belief struggles with us." And again: "It is hard to accept mysteries and to be humble." "We dare not neglect the duty of that wrestling." And at last he exclaims: "By the Lord, I begin to think this intimate religion as tragic as a great love!"

A passion—dumb tragedy—that is what religion often is to the English. Reserved as they are, it plays too large a part with them, is too much in the foreground not to be plainly perceptible, not to be positively illuminating in the light it pours upon those operations of the English soul which we have essayed to study.

Mr. Gosse tells us that his parents were the last adepts of the sort of faith of which, happily for us, he has preserved so keen a recollection. Probably the violent extremes he describes appear to the English of to-day almost as absurd as they do to us.

But not quite! For most of them still cherish unawares a mild hostility toward the forms and ritual of a cult that is not theirs. Their religious sentiment is too interested to be indifferent. Even those who are feeblest in the faith have not a perfect neutrality of attitude toward the "idols." The "wood and stone" before which the elder Gosse would not, under any pretext, admit of anyone's bowing down, must be after all invested with a certain power, else why destroy, why deny, why ridicule them? why seek in every way to minimize their authority? Here again the English turn of mind shows its conservatism, dimly reproducing the primitive view of foreign gods as powers of evil indeed, but still powers! The iconoclasts, by destroying the images, recognized their Divine character, or they would have left them alone.

It is long since the English have demolished the statues of strange gods or made serious war upon a differing creed. But they are perennially shocked by the "idols." Do they reprobate the latter only as a lack of respect toward that which they profanely dare to represent, or do they feel in them some undeniable, unexplainable, and dangerous force? The idea suggests itself that this unacknowledged repulsion, which a Latin at once divines, may be a defensive weapon. For the English, endowed as they are with free imagination, with bold poetic vision, and an inordinate appetite for symbolism, might, unless they were on their guard, lean more than other races to idolatry. Who knows? Certainly not they themselves.

It was once my good fortune to visit a number of Italian churches in company with some English artists—men and women of true breadth of mind, and having much greater knowledge than I of the spots we visited. In each of them I perceived an undercurrent of thought, whose manifestations were nevertheless so slight as to defy analysis. Each appeared to perform a little act of mental reservation: a resolve not to give way to any but purely intellectual emotions; to divorce all mystic significance from what they saw, or rather coldly to regard that significance itself in the light of an historic document, a subject for scientific inquiry and detached speculation. They had—and wished to have—in the church the same attitude as in a picture gallery. But it involved a small effort, a putting one's mind on it.

It is true that the Italian churches, beautiful though they are, do give one intellectual pleasure rather than profound emotion. None the less, my friends placed themselves on the defensive against something, and that something was the fascination of the idol. Not religious antagonism alone could explain the phenomenon. I have heard English Catholics, speaking in admiration of the glory of art which in Italy enhances the magnificence of the cult, betray in their tone a withdrawal, a subtle reserve, a quite involuntary protest, for even these nourish unawares a contempt for the "wood and stone." The English, even Catholic English, are reared on the secular study of the Bible, and memory, the store-house of forgotten ages, preserves for them

the image of those detestable gods of clay and bronze, of wood and stone, with whom the God of Israel, the one God, waged war. Thus in their hearts and minds every concrete representation of the Deity falls foul of a very old instinct of hatred, the hatred of the thousand gods of the East. That hatred will live as long as a religious sense lasts in them, or as long as England lasts.

In the domain of philosophy, æsthetics, literature, or humour, distrust of the image is well enough disguised. One does not see it. What one does see is a distrust of superstition. And what is this superstition? Definitions seem at first to involve us in some difficulty.

Bacon says: "Atheisme leaves a man to Sense, to Philosophy, to Natural Piety, to Lawes, to Reputation: all which may be guides to an outward moral virtue, though Religion were not: but Superstition dismounts all these, and erecteth an absolute monarchy in the mindes of men. Then Atheisme did never perturbe States: For it makes men wary of themselves, as looking no further. And we see the times enclined to Atheisme (as the Time of Augustus Cæsar) were civil Times. But Superstition hath been the Confusion of many States."

What does Bacon mean? How does Superstition bring about the confusion of many States? Because it makes men fanatics? But, alas! it has here no monopoly. Many a Protestant, minded, of course, precisely as he should be, gives evident signs of it.

In our daily careless employ the word "superstition" means, roughly speaking, the fear of the adversary. But this summary definition will hardly content us should we wish to be precise. And the more we wish to be precise the more the idea slips through our fingers.

What is superstition? Is it an attitude of absolute and uncritical abandonment? It cannot be this alone. Is it an exaggeration of the forms of worship? "Soutenir la piété jusqu'à la superstition, c'est la détruire," says Pascal, which seems to mean that there may be a point at which even the true religion becomes superstition. But is such a thing possible? It is conceivable that religion may be abused, misinterpreted, but could one imaginably obey too fully or practice too much?

Superstition is the terrifying presentiment of occult powers, whose existence is divined though not susceptible of proof. You feel their presence, you know they can do what they like with you. Their essence is always unknowable, their designs inexplicable. They strike or they withhold the hand, equally without cause. So one dreads and propitiates them by making offerings and sacrifices. And what is all that indeed but the very essence of religious sentiment? Religion addresses itself to God; so does superstition! I defy the superstitious, with their ludicrous fears, their charms and antidotes and solemn precautions, to analyze their position one step farther without finding God. Take it in its very crudest and commonest form, the belief that upsetting the salt brings bad luck. What else can

that mean than that *somcone* warns you in this way of coming evil ? Someone all-seeing and all-powerful—God, in short ? The case is even clearer if you believe that your own carelessness made the bad luck possible. For you are perfectly aware that spilling the salt could not set fire to the house, or cause a fall in the stock market, or make your friends unfaithful or your business go wrong. What you believe is that such visitations come from a superior power, into whose hands your carelessness has delivered you defenceless, for reasons which nobody knows. Perhaps the act of salt-spilling constitutes a real impiety, whose origin is lost in the night of time; perhaps it is a sign of weakness, of which the irascible powers take quick advantage. In either case the result is the same. You have delivered yourself over to *someone* whom you recognize, to whom you submit, give him whatever name you like or no name at all.

Thus, with Joseph de Maistre, we are led to the conclusion that superstition is simply "an outpost of religion." Then why did Bacon, who if he was irreligious does not show it, say that superstition has been the confusion of many states ? Why do the liberal English, themselves often so eccentric in the manner of their faith, preserve toward superstition such an active hostility ? And this notwithstanding that they are most inconsistently curious of certain of its manifestations, or even favourable to them. They dabble in ghosts, in fortune-telling with cards. There are more, and more thriving, clairvoyants and crystal-gazers in

London than in any other city in Europe. But they do not call this superstition.

A sentence of La Bruyère resolves our difficulties. "Superstition," he says, "appears to be nothing else than an ill-directed fear of God." Milton, defending to his compatriots that proud, intensely national act, the execution of Charles I., wrote: "He hath gloriously delivered you, the first of nations, from the two greatest mischiefs of this life, and most pernicious to virtue, tyranny, and superstition; he had endued you with greatness of mind to be the first of mankind, who, after having conquered their own King, and having had him delivered into their hands, have not scrupled to condemn him judicially, and pursuant to that sentence of condemnation, to put him to death."

Here, to the English mind, are two aspects of the same thing: the Roman religion seeking to bow the nation beneath a foreign yoke, and the Stuart King seeking to establish a despotism—both of them slavery and both intolerable to the English genius. It is not the puerility or the stupidity of superstition that the English hate. They hate it because it is the expression of a slave-born fear. Now every man who "fears God" enough to show exterior signs of his fear is superstitious, let his faith be the purest and sincerest in the world.

That the Emperor Augustus believed in false gods is not enough to make one tax him with superstition. He was only superstitious because he feared them. He protected himself against Jupiter Tonans by carrying always about him a piece of sealskin.

Dreams sent him by celestial personages so perturbed him that, to avert their evil fulfilment, he used every year on a certain day to beg alms in the streets of Rome—a performance just calculated to disgust an Englishman. Midas, having dreamed of heaven knows what, was so persuaded of the inevitable anger of the gods that he drank a bullock's blood in despair, and, stranger still, died of it. And Aristodemus, having heard the dogs howl like wolves and seen grass springing up around his domestic altar, preferred to cut his throat rather than await the certain and terrible fulfilment of these presages. So true it is that as Plutarch says: "Of all fears, superstition is that which most easily destroys all initiative and power of action."

If you lean wholly upon your priest—that means you dare not approach God directly—superstition! Tapers, prayers, offerings, alms — superstition! Death-bed repentance—superstition! Superstition every outward practice tending to disarm God, treating Him as an exacting and irritable overseer whom a tithe will appease. If you were not superstitious you would conceive of God as a perfect and omnipotent being, with whom respectful intercourse is possible, and with whom mutual relations are to be established—He ruling and guiding you, you comprehending and worshipping Him.

The English talk much and eloquently of the "fear of the Lord." In reality they do not fear Him at all. If they did they would not be so persuaded of the perils of a faith other than their own, or so confident of salvation along the lines they them-

selves have laid down. They would not rest in the simple act of belief; they would be driven to make outward signs of the inward grace, to do penance, to bow the knee, to tremble and protest much, to weary God, or His deputy saints, with petitions and presents. They would burn the wax tapers and kiss the bronze toe of St. Peter, put copper or gold in the almsbox—in short, if they had real "fear of the Lord" they would be superstitious.

The English entertain for God the most profound respect. Their relations with the Deity are sincere and cordial; but they have not a whit of that child-like apprehensiveness, that credulous and trembling terror which they characterize as superstition, and which they despise as such. In that scorn the national pride rises to its full height.

Protestantism is a religion admirably suited to a people with a strong taste for liberty and a small endowment of humility. Yet I venture to think that the very freedom permitted by their religion produces—or at least encourages—the English unrest. A passion for liberty implies an equal passion for authority, since in a state of anarchy no one is free. This being true, the passion of the English for spiritual liberty involves a consequence which they find not a little difficult of adjustment. Those Englishmen who have the artistic temperament may practise a religion scarcely different from the Roman Catholic; their coarser-fibred brethren may incline to some uncouth and harsher cult; and those again

in whom imagination is dominant and avid may lend their credence to the theory of the transmigration of souls or the revelations of spiritism. A cult so fluid that it will take practically any shape the believer gives it must suffer from a lack of authoritativeness.

A sensitive and subtle-minded Englishman once said to me: "Protestantism is a vacuum of the soul." He had just become a Catholic in order to put an end to tormenting doubt and self-examination. Longing for the support of absolute law, for the comfort of limiting his mind within definite lines of command and prohibition, he sought peace for his spirit, and found it where he needed not to be his own pope, his own œcumenical council, and where he was released from the task of cutting his own faith to fit the shape of his soul.

Under such a weight of responsibility who can find peace? It is terrible, delirious! You must carry on your shoulders the whole burden of your own salvation, and you must constantly make a choice of actions to save it from ever-threatening danger. You must choose for yourself, and the field of your choice is unlimited. So immense a responsibility begets spiritual pride and dogmatism. This is strange, but so it is. A human being loves his own creation beyond all else in the world; upon it he stakes all that he is. Thus, making your dogma for yourself, you regard it with inordinate affection. You idealize it, and all other possible creeds become dangerous, revolting.

William Chillingworth, writing in the seventeenth

century, said: "If Protestants are faulty in this matter" [of claiming authority] "it is for doing it too much and not too little. This presumptuous imposing of the senses of man upon the words of God, of the special senses of man upon the general words of God . . . this vain conceit that we can speak of the things of God better than in the words of God, this deifying our own interpretations and tyrannous enforcing them upon others, this restraining of the word of God from that latitude and generality, and the understandings of men from that liberty wherein Christ and His Apostles left them, is and hath been the only foundation of all the schisms of the Church, and that which make them immortal."

Thus general liberty begets tyranny. Thus absence of authorized limits sets each man to fixing his own and trying to confine everybody else within them. And thus goes on the endless wrestle to and fro, the hidden drama which to the serious-minded and soul-hungry outranks all other interests. Spiritual bluntness does not exist, worldly distractions cannot lull these vigilant ones. Montesquieu wrote of certain people: "Comme ils n'ont point d'ambition, ils ne soucient pas des premières places, aussi entrent-ils dans le Paradis le plus juste qu'ils peuvent. Pourvu qu'ils y soient, cela leur suffit." Such modest, intermittent efforts and quiet renouncement of the counsel of perfection would, I imagine, far from suffice the religious Englishman. The good folk of Montesquieu plainly set their hope more in the infinite goodness of the Saviour than in his justice. They have no arrogance. The English

—I cannot say it too often, so characteristic is it of them as a people—show theirs even in their religion.

Much concentration has enabled them, as we learned from Mr. Gosse, to penetrate the designs of God. They know in what way He desires to be worshipped, as precisely as if He had told them Himself. They know that the God of their Bible loves spiritual pride, that despite His sternness He repudiates the slavish submission prompted by fear, and expects a voluntary and reasonable obedience. They know that they must not cringe or look aside, but make all haste toward the straight path that leads to righteousness, and walk thereon with heads erect. They know that their God ever loves bravery, cleanliness, the play of the faculties, and the reasonable enjoyment of the good things of life, and that if they have sinned they can resolve to sin no more, and thus be pardoned, having first come to a clear understanding on the matter with God. Thus all the fancy, all their subtlety, all the enthusiasm of their natures, are applied to glean from the Bible the symbolic meanings and unexpected applications whence they draw a pleasure that is profound, complex, and refined beyond our conception. In the Bible, the history of histories, each pious individual finds a message private and particular to himself and his immediate course of action, placed there by God in anticipation of his need and intended for him alone. There is an extraordinary intimacy in all this—due not to momentary nervous exaltation, but to a solid and persistent effort applied with marvellous success alike upon the greatest and the

smallest problems of life. Religion, and religion alone, can displace in an Englishman his habitual need of physical action—his need to do becomes here a need to comprehend.

Practice avails nothing, belief is all, and more than all is the perfect understanding of one's belief. Milton wrote: "A man may be a heretic in the truth; and if he believe things only because his pastor says so, or the Assembly so determine, without knowing other reason, though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds becomes his heresy." Such mastery of a difficult field does not conduce to humility. But it annihilates the intellectual indolence native to the English. In all other fields they evade mental effort, accept ready-made formulas, and resent speculative thought. Upon the subject of religion each mind is independently constructive. Each man revels in acute sensations of mingled delight and pain born of the religious ferment of his mind. His settled dislike of change ceases to be operative, or undergoes a transformation. It is the instinct of the Englishman to bestir his body as much, and his mind as little, as possible. But in the matter of religion each soul is not only active, but tremulous with activity.

Perhaps you know an Englishman with whom you consider yourself on terms of intimacy. Some day it will happen that you find him nervous and irritable. You feel that he is getting away from you. First you imagine you have offended him,

then that he has a secret grief, that he is in love, that he has an attack of bile. Finally you fall back upon the old truism—it is impossible entirely to understand a foreigner. But one day your Englishman—eyes a-sparkle, glowing with ill-disguised ardour—utters a few words not in the Commentaries, and all is made plain. When he contradicted your statements, criticized your taste or your conduct, neglected your letters, and failed to attend when you talked to him, that Englishman was preoccupied with being converted. How could he see or hear you when he was speaking face to face with God ?

I know of one such conversion, in a man whom I thoroughly like and respect. Always a good citizen, a solid believer, saying his prayers and going to church with regularity, he looks now upon all his former course as a life of sin. He had for some time felt an inward feverish unrest, when suddenly it was as though he were laid hold upon and lifted out of the common, unregenerate round into a new and different world. All the considerable good he had done up to that moment he now knew to have been prompted by the Evil One, being conceived and carried out in a spirit purely human. Indeed, it might as well have been evil, since there was no conscious striving for the good. He fancied himself a rational man and his own master—there was the very sign-manual of the Devil ! He was empty of God. But in this grievous state he happened upon a passage in the Bible which in a flash made apparent all the detestable vanity and appalling ugliness of his life. And thus the miracle was

brought about. "And therefore," said Bacon, "there was never miracle wrought by God to convert an atheist . . . but miracles have been wrought to convert idolaters and the superstitious, who acknowledged a deity but erred in his worship." Though a good Protestant, my friend erred in his worship, being blinded by formulas. Neither his affection nor his understanding had waxed strong enough to be articulate. He had never invented a tongue of his own to speak with God. He had been quiescent, without spiritual curiosity, without zeal. The falsity of his religion lay exactly in its passiveness. Like a ray of light upon his eyelids, truth revealed a world without him and a world within changed in colour and substance from the old. The cup of his bliss overflowed.

You may perhaps object that sudden conversion is alike in all countries. Then I must insist upon the special character of this case. My friend had not been indifferent to religious things, except by contrast with his later regenerate state. He renounced no error, abandoned no attitude of negation or lukewarmness. He had been sincerely pious, had bestowed assiduous study upon the Bible, had been diligent in good works, and given amply. He had been by no means snatched from a life of sin to an exalted realm of pure devotion. The impetus and fervour of his conversion were not the result of any sudden rebound from evil to good. No, all that he was, he is, but his every motive, his entire vision, has been transformed.

The change was, in fact, no inconsiderable one.

In his view he had triumphed over actual sin—the sin of inertia, of not manifesting the faith that was in him. The mental process is, I venture to say, peculiarly English. Up to the time of his conversion my friend had not felt God in his every act, as he did from the instant when he laid hold upon Him not as an abstraction, but as a being whose designs it was possible to know and comprehend. Before his conversion he had left God in His heaven. Now, by a mighty effort of the will, he had, so to speak, captured Him, had brought Him down to dwell within himself, and had transmuted Him there into an absolutely constant force. He had, in other words, *realized* God.

God is with him at every moment of the day. They discuss and concert his actions together. His heart is feather-light and fearless, he walks in a world of mysteries as if upon a sunlit road. All is clear to him, all is beautiful. He is not acquainted with that sort of ecstasy which progressively closes the nervous centres to outer influences, and gradually inhibits both speech and thought. On the contrary, the nature of his faith puts him into closer contact than ever with the world of realities; it seems nearer to him, more beautiful, more to be desired. Since he has possessed God his very breakfast tastes better, moonlight is fairer, music more sweet. All his pleasures are Divine gifts, sacred as such, and partaking of a marvellous savour. He has not been commanded to turn his back on joy, but to enjoy more fully, in order to be the more grateful, and thus his joy is sanctified to him. If anyone affronts him, he answers playfully, as you answer a person

who says to you: "Do you really think you will succeed?" He gaily demonstrates that he possesses the necessary energy, and he feels the joy of effort strongly enough to forget the pain. If misfortune befall him he does not need to strive for resignation. God does not know vexation, and he is now become a part of God.

Of course he thinks of another life, but he is very far from calling on death to set him free from this one. He has already entered his Paradise. He stands solidly upon the ground, not floating in a vision between heaven and earth. No scorn is his. He does not morosely avoid his fellow-men in order to nurse his happiness apart. Not striving to wean himself from material pleasures, he has rather developed so wide a capacity for enjoyment that no single joy is indispensable to him, since there are countless others to which he may turn his thoughts. He is ceaselessly active in work and play, and for ever trying to impart the reality of his joy to those about him. All his sensations are heightened: the charm of fine weather, the zest of conversation, the healthy strain of labour, the exhilaration of a game of tennis, the intoxication of a love affair—he can absorb and appreciate one and all of these, for God has lent him His own strength, God has dwelt within him since that moment when he roused from his torpor, renounced his unreflecting, volitionless creed, and by one tremendous act lifted up his supine faith and put it upon his own shoulders to walk with it in the way of truth.

There are atheists in England. They exist even in the ranks of those who teach religion—men of a tortured spirit, who by much study have lost instead of found their faith; who yet, convinced that a steady religious conviction acts healthily upon the morals and the happiness of mankind, continue to affirm what they do not believe, and strengthen others in a creed no longer theirs. In a few beautiful souls here and there I have thought I divined such a secret. Great virtue and a welling bitterness lay beneath the mask of deceit. The man whom I have particularly in mind lived visibly in a state of great and constant inward tension. Never for a moment did he relax his guard. He was his own judge, and he never pardoned. A morbid pride led him to try to justify his unbelief by the attainment of a high and severe ideal of conduct. Beneath his frozen calm one felt the storm; now and then a note of mysterious despair penetrated the surface of his self-discipline and his native goodness. At such moments one guessed the torment of the soul within.

There must be such cases in every country—priests who have lost their faith and from honourable motives still wear the cloth. I have known none personally, but I have known two atheists, laymen and French, both of whom considered that religion was useful for the government of men, and so served it actively, each in his own way. They were dissimilar in age, temper, surroundings, and destiny, but alike in certain telling characteristics. Each had a sort of dark and sombre violence which

was not strength, a capacity for scorn, an inaptitude for forgiveness, an acrid melancholy. In both some dreary and repressive force strangled vigour, eloquence, and ardour. One of them succeeded in his undertakings, the other not; but neither loved life or believed in his fellow-beings. In each an affable manner disguised a scornful heart. One of them had a lively wit which pleased and charmed, the other did not possess the art of winning attention. But each gave the impression of a life lived in solitude—in the midst of a crowd they seemed alone.

It is, of course, a sacrilege to employ for human ends a religion in which one does not believe. Perhaps to the Deity it is a worse affront than bold denial. The two men of whom I speak were not good men, and they were solitary. It seemed to me I saw upon their brows the mark of the wrath of God, and on that of the Englishman the sign of His compassion. I felt that the first two, with their hearts full of contempt for the sublime idea whose instruments they were, were the real atheists, while the Englishman, despite himself, was but a passionate believer who mistook his faith. Could there, I asked myself, exist an Englishman without belief in God ?

CHAPTER VIII

SPORT

"As full of spirit as the month of May,
And gorgeous as the sun at midsummer;
Wanton as youthful goats, wild as young bulls."

SHAKESPEARE.

WHAT makes English sport so different from the same exercises practised with almost equal zeal among other nations? It is true that the English were first to recognize the great value of sport, and that it has acquired with them an historic character; but that is not all, nor is even their long superiority in sport the essential feature of it, for, to speak of no other nation, it is some time since America surpassed them. Moreover, one has the feeling that even if the English fell to definitely second rank, English sport would remain just what it is now—an occupation more engrossing to them than to their conquerors, and quite distinct in character.

What is sport? A beneficial amusement, conducive to the healthful employment of energy. That is our conception. The English hold a different one: to them it is a state of mind—something much more than a pastime, a discipline more moral than physical.

His sense of sport leads the Englishman to culti-

vate self-detachment, self-command, control of his impulses and his nerves, repression of his violence, his vanity, and his egoism. English sport is an ideal—an ideal with roots that go much deeper than one imagines.

The Frenchman likes muscular games, but his taste for unexplored emotions—as well as other more lofty motives—leads him to prefer the perfecting and exploiting of new machinery which will modify and benefit life in general. His predilections lead him into dangers—the daring automobile race, the mortal audacities of the aviator. The ideal he pursues when he risks his life for an idea is quite other than the English ideal of sport. The English are bent on the development of national virtues, not on the evolving of beneficent possibilities for the human species.

Sport disciplines them to overcome temptation, bad temper, embarrassment, desire, curiosity. It teaches them to be self-reliant, enduring, silent under provocation, smiling in suffering—to realize, in short, the perfect Englishman.

What was it taught them that such expenditure of energy, systematized, made into a code, an art, and practised with almost religious devotion, would bring about these results? Did they simply obey orders from their dominating muscles, which cried out for activity? That was certainly the point of departure; but their enjoyment of their muscular functions soon led to the satisfaction of remoter needs. Sport is their own reaction against their instinct of conservatism. It is due to sport that

they can keep on wanting no change, or the least possible change, in anything; that they can keep on taking for granted that everything is exactly as it should be in the world.

Everybody knows how conservative they are—conservative of all that is and all that has been. . . . There is a fine old wainscoted hall at Eton, where English boys learn that England is invincible, by dint of daily gazing at the beams of the wrecked Armada, long before they know anything of Dreadnoughts or super-Dreadnoughts. There are English castles full of family portraits that have hung in the same place since Tudor times. And these are only symbols of much else that bears witness to the English will and the English power to maintain things as they are.

Many of the very principles that created Imperial Rome, many of the dominating, exclusive ideas of ancient Judea, are still fresh and operative in modern England. Relics of the feudal system, dreams of immemorial India, fragments of Chinese morals,* are oddly mosaicked into English Protes-

* The religious code of the Chinese may be summed up thus: "Your heaven is in the sky, and your paradise upon the earth. It depends upon you to realize it. Cultivate your soul, honour your ancestors, respect tradition. Let the past and the future be ever before your eyes. Never forget that you are one with the earth and the universe. Let none of your acts be a blow at that unity; endeavour, on the contrary, always to strengthen it. To work is to transform, to create. Create the soil, create plant and animal life. Create yourself."—SIMON: *La Cité chinoise.*

tantism. Faces and forms after the Greek canon, Greek competitive and festival sports, are to be seen in England. The wonderful little island has been a very sanctuary to preserve the type of all that has elsewhere met destruction.

"The change," says Macaulay, "great as it is, which her polity has undergone during the last six centuries, has been the effect of gradual development, not of demolition and reconstruction. The present constitution of our country is, to the constitution under which she flourished five hundred years ago, what the tree is to the sapling, what the man is to the boy. The alteration has been great. Yet there never was a moment at which the chief part of what existed was not old."

All precisely true. The English found themselves on the past, for they have of it a livelier sense than of the future, and more memory than anticipation. They see no humour in the suggestion of the excellent Colonel Harrison, that the revolutionary Council of 1649 be composed of seventy members, so as to resemble the Jewish Sanhedrim. Many an Englishman has had, past and present, public or private designs of the same class and character.

In the park at Knowle there is a giant tree, with low, spreading branches which have dipped into the rich, moist earth, sent out roots there, and sprung up again into other trees; and these in their turn have repeated the process, so that the primal patriarch has about him a triple circle, three generations of offspring born of his own bulk.

The English soul is like that beautiful tree at

Knowle. In it lodge two opposing forces: the impulse toward action—which to a certain extent must always bring disruption in its train—and the taste for conservatism, which must find a means to counteract or else to satisfy the former force. Hence sport has been invented and deified, as an expenditure of energy which gives the illusion of effective activity, and yet leaves everything as it was, while its exhausted and satisfied votaries draw from it a sense of having done their duty by themselves, the State, and the universe at large.

Sheer muscular activity, even magnificently conceived, would hardly be enough to bring about this result, had not the ethical genius of the English been called in to reinforce the theory of active arms and legs and strong lungs by the addition of moral ideals as well—the discipline, that is, of the character and the emotions. And this training has evolved out of the rough schoolboy that desired type, the English gentleman.

From childhood on the idea is inculcated that devotion to sport is the great means of cultivating all the manly virtues—that it will make them magnanimous, self-controlled, unsullied, happy. Do not say there is nothing noble or useful about this; do not tell me it is childish to treat a cricket match as of national importance. For this it is that has preserved the essential English traits, this is it that has made the English what they are. Then, how can too much time and thought be given to sport? How can too great stress be laid upon it?

Let us try to understand this passion of the English in actual operation.

They support the struggle, the exertion, the pains of defeat, in the spirit of the knight who suffers for his lady, of the monk fasting in the cloister's depths, of young heroes marching to death with a jest on their lips. And the exertion, the struggle, and the pain have far more sweet than bitter taste, for they are one's own, one chose to suffer them! That is the great thing. None of these knights, monks, and heroes achieve, apparently, any tangible result; nor does the football player. He tastes, instead, the infinite savour of a duty accepted without compulsion. That sense of duty accepted satisfies the demands of his moral nature, the knowledge of having himself imposed it assuages his craving for independence, and his whole spirit is content. That all this accomplishes nothing is unbelievable. Each Englishman is an epitome of England; each, in perfecting himself, does service to England, and, by extension, to the whole human race, which could not well dispense with the splendid spectacle. Nervous irritability can be consumed, resentment or grief overcome, in a game of golf! And one has the satisfaction not only of self-mastery, but of the knowledge that in regulating himself he has improved the state of the Cosmos.

Further, the instinct of sport is not only manifested locally, in the field of physical exertion, but extends to all departments of life. When the Englishman rises above himself, before an ideal of great or small compass, he feels a courageous gaiety

and a profound animation, because he is satisfying a primordial need of his being—the need of freedom. The sacrifice gallantly performed, the good-humour in abnegation, the gift of oneself made like a trifle of no moment, the unselfish and costly resistance to injustice—all these belong to the true sporting feeling.

The Puritan who, by order of Queen Elizabeth, had his right hand chopped off, and in the very moment employed his left to fling his hat in the air, crying, "God save Queen Elizabeth!"—that Puritan had the soul of a sportsman. And Erasmus Dryden, grandfather of the poet, who at seventy years went to prison rather than pay an insignificant tax which he considered unjust—he had it too. It is the sporting spirit that makes the English assemble by thousands to protest against something, march miles and miles, or stand and yell like madmen, or march and yell both at once, and then, persuaded they have accomplished something, peaceably disperse, without any inclination to break windows, burn omnibuses, or twist lamp-posts. All these examples wear the sign of moral liberty. These are sporting souls, which means that they revel in constraint self-imposed, to the end of improving themselves or something else.

But they are under a delusion none the less—such realists must have one delusion, and theirs is not a small one—when they imagine that physical exercise has the actual, practical value which everything must have in order to interest them passionately.

It is true that sport moulds their individual

energies and shapes them beautiful souls; but it is also true that it employs those energies wholly, absorbs those souls, overwhelms them, shuts their eyes to the future, and to more generous interests even to dangers. Play makes them proud, satisfied with England, prone to think that all is well, when they have only been playing. England has not gone a step forward, and meantime others, who play less, have been working and going ahead.

Thus feeding them on shadow, sport weakens their sense of reality, their taste for adventure and supremacy. It makes them content with smoke and no fire. They believe they will all make good soldiers because they have submitted to the discipline of sport, but it does not inevitably follow. They think they can fight and win because they have fought and won on the cricket-field. Thanks to their sport, they are so vigorous as youths, so untiring at middle life, so sound in old age, that they find it useless to apply and sharpen their intelligence. But it is not to the physically most fit that the world will belong to-morrow. The very training and employment of their muscles gives them an optimism and tranquil indifference not without peril.

"The kingdom has been for long in great prosperity and flower; and you know a flowering plant is in all the more need of care and tendance." This they put into the mouth of King Edward III., "of blessed memory."

The English, realists as they are, do not see that their cult of sport might turn out to be a snare—a chimera of fine and noble appearance, but a chimera none the less.

CHAPTER IX

THE ÆSTHETIC SENSE

"The whole power, whether of painter or poet, to describe rightly what we call an ideal thing, depends upon its being to him, not an ideal, but a *real* thing."—RUSKIN.

EVEN when not connoisseurs in any branch of art, the English in general profess respect for the artist. Painting, music, and literature, to those who do not understand them, represent difficulty, something worthy of effort; and when the effort has accomplished its end, something worthy of esteem—the more esteem the less they know of the matter.

In the presence of a great artist or a great work of art, they do not inquire what sort of, if any, emotions they experience. A famous artist, a masterpiece—so much they know, and they unreservedly, without further investigation, acclaim it. They pin their enthusiasm to anything they can. An elderly English lady once gave me her impressions on hearing Lablache: "Oh, my dear, if you could only have seen him in the *Barber*, when he picked up the handkerchief, so lightly, fat as he was! It was a triumph—the house rocked with applause!"

This elderly lady, of course, did not know in detail what made Lablache the incomparable singer he was—and he would very likely not have appreciated

the grounds of her enthusiasm. She admired him none the less. Any stout man who can pick up a handkerchief with address is not necessarily an object of admiration; but once established that the stout man is an artist of reputation, his smallest gesture becomes as worthy of applause as his greatest vocal achievement. The quaintness of the enthusiasm was a tribute, modest but sincere, to the unknown god.

Why should the lady be obliged to know the virtues of the *bèl canto?* That the singer had a fame already achieved put her in a frame to admire him. Her attitude, which is that of many of her countrymen, creates an atmosphere very different from that prevailing among any people with a critical sense, who, directly they do not understand, begin to revile. But the English for their part have a vast benevolence toward all effort, in accordance with their idea that every species of it is elevating, and that every success is necessarily beautiful, even morally beautiful.

In the fifteenth century there lived a certain Englishman, Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, who had read and travelled much, lectured in the University of Padua, and wrote Latin with such exquisiteness as to charm Æneas Sylvius, who was a judge in these matters. This same erudite and subtle-minded Tiptoft was a monster of cruelty. In that harsh age, full of the savageries of civil strife, he succeeded in making himself so remarked that men called him the Butcher. After his death the printer Caxton—a fine man, if ever there was one—wrote of him as follows:

"What great loss was it of that noble, virtuous, and well-disposed lord! When I remember and advertise his life, his science, and his virtue, methinketh—God not displeased!—over-great a loss of such a man."

When I read this I thought of the old lady who so admired Lablache. Caxton was wonderfully well able to appreciate the Latin of Tiptoft, whereas the old lady knew nothing about singing; nevertheless, their ideas were the same. In admiring the "virtue" of the Butcher and the agility of the corpulent basso, they both displayed, in strange but convincing fashion, the same sentiment—respect for success.

Nothing is more touching than the industrious inattention, the bravely stifled boredom of an Englishman in a picture-gallery. One day at Bâle, in the Holbein room, I saw two Englishwomen enter, by opposite doors. Each gave an exclamation of pleasure, and hurried to greet the other. I listened, impelled by curiosity. They were, it appeared, old friends, who met rarely, and they began at once with a fire of questions about Mary, John, Edward, and Pauline, and ever so many other people scattered over the face of the earth. Pauline was in Bombay, and had two children; Edward was doing something in China; John, having lost his wife, had gone to America. All this information took some time to impart. I ought to have gone away, but I stayed. They finished with the joys and sorrows of their families, and began upon them-

selves: one was going to her husband in India, the other to her daughter in Italy. They were wise to inform themselves thoroughly, for who knows when they met again? They talked, gazing into each other's eyes, absorbed, oblivious of their surroundings. Suddenly the one who was going to India drew out her watch. "It is late; they will be waiting luncheon for me." "And for me," said she who was bound for Italy. "Let us go together." They left the room still talking, without a glance for the dead Christ or the lymphatic woman with the puffy, patient face, painted by the great Holbein.

What did those English ladies of the travelling families want in the Museum of Bâle? They had come on a pious pilgrimage; suppose they did forget to look at the pictures when they got there! Not to everyone who visits his relics does the saint make an appearance; and he would not appear at all without that belief in him which is spread abroad by pilgrims who will never see the supernatural visage nor seek to penetrate the mystery, but believe blindly and simply, and approach the consecrated spot with hearts already submissive.

I was struck by the contrast when soon after, in the Louvre, I met a workman, dressed in Sunday best, with a lively, inquisitive face, leading a little boy. The child said to him, in tone all interest: "Papa, where is the vase of Soissons? I should like to see it." "It must be on the first floor," said the father comfortably. A French father always answers something.

That workman was quite ignorant—most likely

happily so—of what the vase of Soissons might be, the circumstances of its connection with Clovis, and the unfortunate outcome for himself. But he was not daunted by his ignorance. He was not to be staggered by the vase of Soissons, his own ignorance of which by no means increased his respect for it, but rather the contrary. An Englishman would simply have told his son, "I don't know." And if the instructed lad had told him the story, as I heard the French boy beginning to do, in his vague and childish way, the Englishman would have gained, of course, no precise idea of the transaction, but he would dimly have felt the flavour and the antiquity of the anecdote to be beyond him, and been quite convinced that such matters contained an august and awesome principle; he would have respected because he could not know or understand.

It is, I suppose, the respect, latent or declared, the real humility of the English whose culture and intelligence do not permit them to taste the joys of art, that make possible the extraordinary penetration and incomparable æsthetic sense of certain English.

It has always seemed to me that Nature, when she made the English, acted like an impassioned artist, who, to achieve the perfect masterpiece, seeks, gropes, recommences a hundred times, and only attains the marvellous result after having spoilt much material. English beauty might not be what it is if English ugliness did not display such strange

excess. In the same way, it may be needful that a large number of Englishmen should be of an inflexible and impenetrable mentality, in order that there might be realized that rare type of intelligence, sparkling, subtle, and various, which occasionally comes to flower and makes a surprising impression of vigour, of poetic power, of comprehension, of depth and height and freedom. In England there is little of the "happy medium"; that which is not excellent is often wretchedly bad. Nature's mistakes are singularly, brutally evident; but one feels they are useful, even necessary, if she wins through them to the exceptions which compel our unreserved admiration.

I feel, for instance—I am probably quite absurd—that the English make no effort to mitigate their ugliness, to lessen or dissemble it in part, or to succeed in establishing a general mediocrity of physical appearance in the race, as happens elsewhere. If they are ugly, they come to terms with their ugliness; they even fail to realize it—or nearly so. If they are dull, think little, and understand less, they are not dissatisfied. Their dulness does not give them an irritable longing after brilliancy—as happens with us. In England, people are dull or ugly with confidence and composure; for they preserve—at least, up till now—their instinct to remain where and what they are, do what they can where they are, and not try to put themselves in their neighbour's place. They put up with themselves—even pleasantly. This general resignation, favourable to the development of a superior individual type, is an

effect of the feeling for aristocracy which one finds in England at the base of all phenomena, physical or moral.

With us, the average person is capable of expressing a correct and well-grounded opinion about Rembrandt, Wagner, Chinese art, Egyptian sculpture, the landscapes of Monet, the statues of Rodin. Hardly anyone utters gross stupidities on the subject of æsthetics. But with this general aptitude for conversation upon art goes the fact that hardly anyone says anything with a stamp of individuality; and the flow of well-chosen, incontrovertible remarks is anything but pregnant, and expresses nothing so much as apathy. In England the mass of people could not by any chance give the grounds of their admiration for a picture, a performer, a symphony; their explanations are likely to sound like those of the old lady who had heard Lablache; but there are other English who can enter into the very soul of art, discern its precious secrets, and discover to you in a word something unseen, which without them never would be seen.

I have heard from English lips the most penetrating, the most exquisite æsthetic criticism I have ever listened to, and I shall never forget it.

The English æsthetes—not those of the caricature, ennobling their lives by fervent contemplation of a Japanese teapot, but the true æsthetes, those

whose intensity of comprehension places them on a level with the artist—are remarkable for their physiological sense, so to speak, of the artistic.

A masterpiece always satisfies a need, expresses a desire, fills a lack, gratifies a physical aspiration. The bold and springing arch, the sight of which swells the breast is an allusion to the respiratory state of the artist who conceived it. The abrupt juncture of certain lines expresses the impulse to leap into action on the part of the designer's muscles; the harmony of tones corresponds to the quantity of lymph in the painter's organism, the number of his red corpuscles, and the manner in which his bloodvessels contract. Art in all its forms is nothing but the subjective objectivized. The English æsthetes especially perceive this; for instead of intellectual images and abstract theories, they have sensations, and analyze them, thus reaching the intimate essence of the masterpiece. It yields itself to them in a contact so close as to be almost material.

It is their special care, and their especial talent, to free the precious achievements of art from the long-sustained burden of wordy and empty commentaries and chance pronouncements indefatigably repeated. Their reasons for admiration are other than the accepted ones. They are the sound old reasons that hit in the very centre of reality, and achieve depth by simpleness.

The beautiful movements of the English soul are not those of a supple nature abandoning itself to life, but reactions against primitive instincts—at-

tempts, if not at entire change, at least at modification. They have invented a strict morality because they are dangerously violent; because they incline to cruelty, they brand it more sternly than any other vice. They have the best manners in the world because they are at bottom brutal. Their æsthetic convictions and activities exhibit the same kind of reaction. Beyond all else in the realm of art they venerate Greek sculpture, and extol serenity because they are full of passion and anguish. Look at their own art—for example, the delicious eighteenth-century portraits. An impetuosity or haste in execution, an abrupt touch here and there, a hint of agitation disturbs the calm and elegant surface. A breeze always plays with the fair tresses and floating scarves, the sky rolls up swollen clouds, the trees bend, a quivering pervades the landscape. Or else the attitude of the charming ladies and handsome gentlemen suggests movement just arrested and presently to begin again. The hands are moveless, but impatient; the gaze shows recent emotion and emotion to come more plainly than the present calm. Admire them quickly—they will not stay; hopes and fears call them hence. To taste the special thrill of that exquisite art, compare it with Italian portraits of the sixteenth century. Here is more than another epoch—it is another people. Observe the high repose of this race famous for the lively gesture, for vehemence and ungoverned passions. Before sitting to the artist, these nobles may have stabbed someone, or will do so when they leave him; but the canvas shows them of a marvellous

immobility, the eyes quiet, the hands without projects. Great portraiture expresses through the model of the moment the soul of the race; and the English soul, beneath its cold correctness, is profoundly agitated; the Italian soul, with its theatrical violence, remarkably calm. And yet one portrait there is—a Titian—that hints at inward trouble. It is the portrait of a man. He is there but for the moment; he does not possess peace; he is all fugitive feeling and desire, and strange secrets glimmer in his eyes. It is that portrait of a young Englishman in the Pitti, at Florence.

English people of great taste approve and preach simplicity and material detachment. It goes with their creed of serenity and the avoidance of belittling detail and petty emotion. They subtly appreciate the lofty style of the great bare rooms in Italian palaces, the noble emptiness of the churches, the great free spaces, the magnificent calm of continuous line. But they do not always practise their preaching.

I know a very harmonious English drawing-room, where one day I counted, on a tiny centre table, twelve bouquets. Each, to be sure, was a little work of art—but, after all, a dozen bouquets! Away from home the English are in love with form, they are enthusiastic over the bare and open French gardens—but their own are full of trees and choked with flowers. And what a prodigious and significant quantity of trinkets they conceive and adjust to

their everyday needs! How many cases for different purposes, little note-books to catalogue and classify one's possessions, the letters one writes—or does not write—the books read, the plays seen, the birthdays of one's friends, receipted bills, calling lists, plans, memories, original epigrams! What system for sealing an envelope, what tools for special purposes, what utensils to keep in order other utensils! They appear to stand in need of these devices to regulate and direct their actions, as though, were they suddenly deprived of memory, they could supply for them the place of initiative.

We should be embarrassed by all this specialization; for though luxury has given to a small number of French the habit of objects intended for special service, our instinct is still to take pleasure in making one thing serve ten purposes. What for us would be cumbersome is for the English only convenient. Its complexity is simplified by their logic and regulated by their habits of systematization. That precept to which they so accurately conform, "A place for everything, and everything in its place"—is it not the whole and true formula of art? Each one of the twelve bouquets on the little table had its place in the harmony. You would have marred it by removing one of them.

Nothing is either absolutely beautiful or absolutely ugly. Beauty and ugliness depend on the relation of lines, colours, or sounds—that is to say, upon rhythm. In all rhythm voluntarily established there is a comprehensible image of life and a potential beauty. The English have the sense of

rhythm—the love, almost the mania, for it. Rich, varied, and free, it breathes in their verse; furious, insistent, and strange in their music; their literature mirrors it.

Rhythm, recurrent sensation, is necessary to no one so much as to those whose comprehension does not wake at the first shock. Repetition helps them to seize, to recognize, and to enjoy. Their best-written novels have situations which repeat themselves apparently without cause. Take, for instance, "The Egoist," that powerful book of Meredith. The hero says and does the same things, under the same circumstances, twice, three times, or even more, and not at all in order to bring out a different phase, a new shade of his personality. He re-does what he has done, in the same setting, for the sole pleasure of the author and his public. We call this prolixity, we countrymen of Montaigne and Voltaire —Montaigne, who forbade dwelling on things; and Voltaire, who introduced impatience into our literature. We find it enough to say a thing once, quickly and well. Directly we understand—and that is at once—we wish to go on to something else. Repetitions which to us would be stupid supply the Englishman with the rhythm indispensable to his slowness.

He demands repetition not only in literature, but in everything—morals, religion, politics. Certain projects of reform have reappeared year after year in Parliament without the change of a single word, and been admitted solely when by dint of coming back unchanged they lost their aspect of novelty.

Parliament conforms to the national taste for rhythm.

It is because he is safeguarded by his unimpressionableness that the English traveller so readily adjusts himself to the manners and customs of the countries he visits. He is aware that long before the strange ways of a strange people can make any deep impression on him he will be off to fresh fields and pastures new.

All races know in the period of youth this need of repetition. They apply to rhythm to create and sustain their memories, fix their attention, register their spiritual growth, make records of themselves and their environing mysteries. With maturity the instinct commonly recedes. But the English have kept it. Their æsthetic sense, however living, is like everything else about them, conservative.

CHAPTER X

THE LOVE OF GARDENS

"Truly every man has a Paradise around him until he sins, and the angel of an accusing conscience drives him from his Eden. And even then there are holy hours, when this angel sleeps, and man comes back and with the innocent eyes of a child looks into his lost Paradise again—into the broad gates and rural solitudes of nature."

LONGFELLOW.

IN 1499 Erasmus found he lacked money to go to Italy, where he had wished to study Greek. As it cost less to go to England, he went to England, whence a little later he wrote:

"I have found in Oxford so much polish and learning that now I hardly care about going to Italy at all, save for the sake of having been there. When I listen to my friend Colet it seems like listening to Plato himself. Who does not wonder at the wide range of Grocyn's knowledge? What can be more searching, deep, and refined than the judgment of Linacre? When did Nature mould a temper more gentle, endearing, and happy than the temper of Thomas More?"

I am of the same mind as the shrewd Erasmus. I go even farther; for even without the theologian Colet, the physician Linacre, the Hellenist Grocyn,

even without Thomas More, to live in England seems to me delicious.

Some of my compatriots claim to experience material discomforts—probably because they do not speak English. It is true that in that sweet land the people do not guess by the look on your face what it is you want, as they do in Italy. But when they understand, what good will, how simple and easy everything becomes!

Two years ago I took a house at Maidenhead. The day before I expected to arrive, with several friends, a large number of boxes were to come, which must be delivered at once, or great inconvenience would ensue. Meanwhile, after a rapid inspection of the cottage, I had to return to London. Whom could I get, in my absence, to receive the boxes, in that little town where I knew nobody? Who would see that they reached their destination? I sought out the station-master, and in my halting English told him my perplexity. He, who naturally had never seen me before that moment, listened with an air of alarming gravity. I could not tell if he disapproved of me, if my troubles bored him extremely, or if he did not understand at all. When I had finished he said with a drab tone and look: "Don't trouble yourself." I tried to draw out something more explicit, but he only repeated, with solemn decisiveness: "Don't trouble yourself." My train whistled; I departed, certain I should never see my boxes again. Next day I found them at my house. That taciturn man had procured a waggon, given orders, and paid. I can swear that no Italian *capo*

stazione and, oh, above all, no German, would have done that.

The Maidenhead station-master I have encountered all over England. Under different faces, manners, and clothing he was ever obliging—and how much more! He had a fixed resolve not to bother—a resolve quite as strong not to be bothered. He stayed in his place, and kept you in yours. He insisted on nothing, articulated facts without comment, then relapsed into his honourable silence. With him, no loss of time in speculations, discussions, digressions. He spoke, and it was finished. You never saw him offer what was not asked for. He never offered anything, and he never seemed to expect anything—neither sympathy nor aggression. He knew how to be indifferent from crown to toe-top, and to the depth of his soul; how to nip in the bud any tendency to an impression that he could cease to be so. He had no curiosity. He lived without knowing that you were there, and let you live without advertising his presence. O good and great English station-master! What might we not learn from him, those of us with hearts and brains and nerves hag-ridden by sentimental considerations and fancies as imperious as fleeting, exhausted by meddling in others' matters, and neurasthenic by reason of others meddling in ours—to all those of us who need peace and independence!

On reaching England, one contracts the habit of liberty, as elsewhere one might contract a fever. The sensation is exquisite. No one interferes with your life. No chance acquaintance of a day thinks

of imposing on you his own receipt for happiness, or tries to bear your burdens or share the weight of your secrets. No one is importunate out of fear of seeming cold; no one makes you miserable by making himself miserable on your account. Oh, happy country, where the people do not hesitate to say if you disturb them, where the common relations of life never become a round of futile sacrifice, where good breeding does not demand every moment a hundred vain lies and a thousand absurd small propitiations.

There is an old French story of a devoted pair who discover by chance that neither likes sorrel soup, after eating it three times a week for a half-century, each of them hiding his dislike from the other, whom he imagines to dote upon it. The little fact that this could scarcely happen in England introduces there a wonderful security into common relations and great ease to the spirit.

But, apart from her people, there are in England certain aspects of visible things whose penetrating loveliness once for a summer and an autumn so nourished my thoughts and satisfied my heart that I want to fix here, if I can, the memory of them, which abides with me now like the perfume of flowers in an empty room, filling with delight the hours and the silences.

All that I see in England pleases me. The beauty is of a marvellous completeness, the ugliness intensely expressive. London to me is one of the

poetic spots of the earth. In her atmosphere, so gently mournful, so mildly resplendent, so persistently full of secrecy, I feel a sense of parting and turmoil that is both painful and pleasant. The mist that dims the air seems to come from great distances, charged with messages and dreams from the unknown; it is so imperceptibly gone, bearing away other messages and dreams.

And I love the streets, now gloomy, now clamorous, but never gay. I love the shops, full of things so bright, clean, and fascinatingly complicated that I would like to buy them all, and get the illusion that disorder and dirt no longer exist in the world, and that nothing is ever worn out or untidy. Still more I love the shop-windows, before which I can think such long thoughts. There are sad-coloured silks, that might have been for the wear of sultanas long dead and mouldered; and sumptuously barbaric jewellery that calls up pictures of another race. Quantities of the things, I know, are of English manufacture; but I like to think how much besides comes to England on the rhythm of the waves, for the thought invests all this merchandise with a legendary glamour. I see in it the treasures, the gems, the spices, the tissues so fine as to go through a finger-ring, the gold embroideries, which in my fairy-stories used to be confided to the wind that filled the sails of strange-looking vessels, and then to the chances of pathless, sun-beaten deserts, till slaves unrolled them at length from their linen covers and laid them at the feet of zenanaed Princesses. Thus the English shops, like the English soul, evoke

for me the Orient, the Arabian Nights wait at every corner. In front of the fish-market I cannot keep the thought out of my head that some brilliant scaly beast on the marble slab may have inside it a diamond fit to change the destinies of men, or that perhaps along with it there was drawn from the water that copper vase in which Solomon shut up the rebellious genie.

Yes, I love all the English sights; and most of all of them I love the English landscape; and of all her landscapes I love most that of the gardens that spread about her ancient mansions.

The love of gardens is not a youthful taste. In youth one rather loves pictures and sculpture, perhaps because one seeks in their forms of moveless beauty a respite and a calm from one's own unstable ardours. But with age the peace of evening comes to one's soul, and then one turns towards living variety, to the tree not one leaf of which is like another leaf, to nature which endlessly dies and is born again. One likes to see affirmed the law of movement and eternal change, and the Divine hand moving more observably among the works of men.

Then what sweet solace in a beautiful garden!

All our gardens were conceived like salons—settings for refined and vivacious social intercourse, merely more spacious than the salons in the palaces adjoining them. English gardens are for silence; they were made by a people with an intimate and religious feeling for nature.

Some English people there are who never notice the human form, whether it is beautiful or ugly. But all whom I know have watched the setting sun and the flashing and fading colours of the sea. The beauty of trees and rivers and mountains gets woven in their fibres and mingled with their passions. Shocks of fate drive the English within themselves, but they are soothed there by the peaceable counsels of nature, which is like a fixed part of themselves, where they can support their griefs and joys and all of life that is precarious and transitory.

I have asked myself whether one could even understand their books, if all the parts descriptive of natural scenery were cut out of them. The drama of their hearts depends so much upon the friendly or hostile aspect of the skies, the waters, and the spreading view.

Shakespeare had in a prodigious degree this sensitiveness to nature. He does not describe the rooms where Hamlet slew Polonius or Banquo's ghost appeared at the board; one sets the stage by one's imagination. But the heath in *Macbeth*, the Forest of Arden, the "wood near Athens," and the island of the *Tempest* he has made present to our senses in terms of light and scent, and embedded them in our memory as profoundly as all that we have seen and found lovely in living scenes like Fontainebleau or the tapestried avenues of Compiègne. Shakespeare, when he wrote, so passionately possessed nature, saw so clearly the dawn upon dewy leaves or the moon's white darts piercing the

undergrowth, that, without speaking of them, he gives them to us for ever.

Their love of nature makes the English deeply reverent of her; they do not constrain her, but give her play. An edenic air lingers in their most elaborate gardens, even those laid out in French or Italian style. One has the fancy that the sea-breeze may have tossed there quite at hazard the seeds of these splendid flowers and mighty trees, and that they all shot up together and realized their vigorous freedom by a return to primitive law. For when God gave the earth to men it was just a sublime garden, where all flourished without effort in an ordered impetuosity, all being yet pure, and the touch of the Divine hand still perceivable.

There the dust of centuries dead is buried beneath life and love, in masses of verdure and blossom. Walking in the midst of the feast of colour and perfume, one can forget that there is care, ugliness, crime and pain in the world; one's mind, cradled in delicious peace, can shyly harbour the wistful illusion of having been borne back to the unspoiled beginning of creation.

In the garden of Miss J—— one sees the true art of garden-planning revived; she has the genius of an artist in colour, and knows how, by means of subtle combinations, to give flowers souls. Her garden is shut in on all sides by silent woodland, and I walked within it in spaces of grey and rose like a Chinese crêpe, the delicate suggestiveness of whose harmony

kept the thoughts in a pleasant suspense. The wide horizons of Sutton Place gave me a happy sense of expanding lungs. At Longleat—a park of royal beauty, with an entrance well named "the gate of Paradise," underfoot mosses that swallow the foot-fall, and groups of giant rhododendron—at Longleat I saw a vista of avenue where a man stood and flung grain, with the full sweep of his arm, to a flock of pheasants whose brown plumage had the lustre of fine old bindings. It made a picture of a moment, like an illustration for a fairy-book, with all the sound and movement of the forest background arrested, as it were, to see it. Then it vanished, but it had deepened for me the mystery of the summer.

I saw the great trees of Ashbridge, whence Elizabeth was rudely dragged when they accused her of treason; and the splendours of Hatfield, whence she departed to mount the throne, under escort of a thousand gentlemen. Hatfield was an incomparable labyrinth, designed by James I, of whom our Henry IV, of the lively tongue, said that he was "the wisest fool in Christendom." Certainly when he conceived the labyrinth at Hatfield he was very wise and no fool at all!

I rambled at Gorhambury, where stand, devoured by greedy verdure, the tottering relics of a house where Bacon walked and pondered. At Montacute, a sixteenth-century Italian park, is a hill where tradition says they celebrated a cult of serpents.

Some episodes in Anglo-Saxon history occurred there too. Dropmore owns a beautiful promenade in the Italian style, that seems to summon Florentine ladies and gentlemen to polite diversion. At Northwick troops of deer come to look in at the windows of the mansion, which owns a brilliant picture-gallery. At Batsford one clambers up a steep, wild path, smothered in prodigious exotic vegetation, and sees here and there obscured among the foliage great animals of Japanese bronze. It reminds you of something—have you ever been here before, you wonder? No; it is one of the intoxicating scenes where Loti has indulged his fancy.

I went to Brimton, where Montaigne would have enjoyed strolling with his Plutarch, along the time-darkened façade, from which the windows send out pensive gleams. Brimton has a reserve and delicacy almost French. I walked in the cedar avenue at Taplow Park, and imagined the Queen of Sheba standing under those black giants, rubbing her little feet among their slippery fallen needles; slender, sumptuous, and proud, and weary with the weight of her jewels. At Cookham I was admitted to a garden on the water, with a semi-circle of rose-trees set apparently for a ballet of princess-nymphs. Cookham has an exquisite garden, created by Lady R——, a true artist, who has there expressed something of her soul.

Moor Park, in Hertfordshire, was, in the time of Sir William Temple, "the perfectest figure of a garden I ever saw," as he called it himself. It has a lake, like a cup of liquid silver, poised at the top of a long slope, where it mirrors in spring huge round bouquets of rose-coloured rhododendrons. There is another Moor Park, to which Sir William retired after having invented the Triple Alliance, where he tended his apricots and grew asparagus that William III could eat down to the very end. There is scarcely a trace now of the garden which was lovingly laid out in Dutch style by the retired diplomatist, but other memories make it a touching spot. The mediocre celebrity, with a fame greater than his deserts, who had seen courts and Princesses, and wearied of mingling with great events, had an Irish secretary—a little man rather mean in appearance. Between him and a female menial there grew up in the house a violent and tormented love. But that poor love has an immortality unshared by the reputation of the retired Ambassador; for the Irishman was the great, the mad, the bitter genius that was Jonathan Swift. When they tell you, "This is the room where Swift first saw Stella," you forget that the Dutch garden of Sir William Temple is now no more.

Moor Park is still lovely, though no trace survives there of the diplomatist that grew such fine asparagus.

In England one scarcely ever contemplates a phenomenon that a concealed paradox does not

start up beside it. It is one of the stimulating experiences of the country.

Nothing has more repose than an English park. The soft lawns, the wide vistas, the air of security and peace everywhere diffused, tranquillize the heart. Nothing is more sombre and stormy than the histories of the splendid houses that have stood for centuries in these quiet parks.

The ferocity of their legends mirrors a bygone England; the peace one tastes among the trees and flowers is the work of contemporary England, disciplined, fortunate, possessing herself in possessing so many things. Yet the past never quite dies, and in England is more alive than elsewhere. Nothing but invasion and conquest can entirely remould a race. Changes in customs, morals, prosperity, and in the economic laws that govern these, are really exterior modification; the instincts may be silenced for a time, have to seek new outlets, but they persist. The English castle, standing with its terrible dramas, within its rich and pleasant parks, is symbolic of the English soul, which, though now regulated and controlled, had an ancestral history of incredible violence and frenzy. And as every memory contains the germ of a re-beginning, these English castles furnish food for many strange thoughts.

Nearly every one has a ghost; or, at least, in nearly every one lingers some bloody memory of murders and executions. Their former owners issued from them more than once to sanguinary adventures.

Sutton Place belonged to Francis Weston, who

was beheaded; Knowle to Cranmer, who was burned, before he resigned it to Henry VIII. Moor Park was the property of Monmouth's widow, who, though her husband had been grossly unfaithful, mourned for his shameful death by having the tops cut out of the park trees. Littlecote celebrates the cruel memory of one Will Darrell. That infamous man —the story was told by the midwife who was led thither blindfold to attend upon a masked lady— that frightful monster received his new-born babe, flung it upon the fire, and watched it burn. Small wonder the parent is doomed to haunt the scene of his atrocity!

At Farnham the memory is preserved of a pleasantry perpetrated by the great Elizabeth. She supped one evening with the Duke of Norfolk, whose affections were too deeply engaged by Mary Stuart. Rising from table, the Queen, in a tone of gentle raillery, bid the Duke have a care on what pillow he laid his head. The mocking Queen! Norfolk afterwards laid his head upon the block.

These sleep at Bisham Abbey their last sleep: John, Earl of Salisbury, beheaded in 1400; Richard, Earl of Salisbury, beheaded in 1460; Edward Plantagenet, Earl of Warwick, beheaded in 1499. Such tragic memories mingle with the graces of the spot to make it more alluring. Here, too, Elizabeth walked a prisoner of her fierce sister; she soothed beside this tranquil water her fears and her pride— her impatience, too, for Mary was not in health. . . . I walked in the garden seeking traces of her; perhaps on such an afternoon she beguiled the time

by planting the tree they show you for hers—a great gnarled and writhen fruit tree, with a bark like an animal's hide, sick with age. It stands in a vegetable garden choked with verdure, watered by a stagnant canal covered with a thick, weedy growth. Here and there a space of dark brown water shows, a mirror reflecting shadows only. Old pear and apple trees rise among a confusion of flowers. It is very still. Silence seems to have dwelt for ever in the vegetable garden at Bisham.

As you walk in the avenues a sense of disquiet hangs about you. It follows you when you enter the house, waits for you at the end of dim corridors and in the rows of rooms where so much has happened that it is safer not to speak of. And suddenly one sees a ghost, a fearful white apparition. It is the portrait of a woman—you would not look at her, but you do not like to turn your back and have her look at you. This ghastly pale creature was Lady Hoby, who in the sixteenth century beat her little son to death for making blots in his copy. Now she haunts Bisham, but not as you see her on the canvas. Her face and hands are black, and she washes them with unavailing gestures, like Lady Macbeth. She is visible on moonlit nights. These are not pleasant things to hear, standing before her picture, with daylight already fading.

One gets firmer hold on one's courage again, thank Heaven! in the adjoining chapel, where the Hoby dead are laid to rest. This one was the last English Ambassador to the Pope; that one was a French Ambassador. His widow composed three

epitaphs for him, in Greek, Latin, and English. One of them ends:

> "Give me, O Lord, a husband like Thomas,
> Or reunite me to Thomas my husband."

Is not this a happy mingling of piety and good sense, of tender regret and sane desire of life? The Lord took into consideration the preference betrayed by the order of Lady Hoby's prayer. She married again. How true it is that in all ages, despite the headsmen and the ghosts, the love of life and the sense of reality have held the field in this tragic and practical land, and have been requited!

At Esher Place. The summer is dying; the pure light delights the eye, like a crystal with the merest misty breath upon it. A penetrating odour of fallen leaves induces a light melancholy in the mind. Along the castle wall runs one of those borders that are the glory of English gardens—and this is surely one of the most glorious. It is all of mauve: little flowers that arch and rear their heads erectly, tall drooping blossoms; shades tender and almost gay, shades sombre to mournfulness, verging on violet. The long, wide strip of solid colour seems composed of the grey-blue eastern sky and the rose-colour of the west—a bit of the English heavens brought to earth—and oh, what perfume!

The gardens of Esher Place are infinitely various. In one place peacocks are cut out of the bronze greenery of the yews. Along the course of a path

follows a little stream, and in it some sociable leisurely red fishes promenade, keeping pace with you. They are going, like you, to look at the Venetian carving that prettily ornaments the wall at the bottom of the path. You feel the charm of strolling here with these mannerly fish, in a Venetian garden, on an autumn day in England.

The garden is paved, and between the flags spring up little plants; for in this exquisite country even the crevices flourish, and the joints of old stone staircases. I remember how in Rome every break in the masonry becomes in spring a little oasis, and all the walls from top to bottom are draped with bouquets and garlands. But in Rome they scrape them all out and pull them down as fast as they can—that is an Italian idea of cleanliness. Instead of scraping, the English sow their old walls, and the result is delightful.

On leaving the goldfish, I found myself in a part of the garden where everything was white—and all imaginable whites: the blue-white of snow; the changing, lustrous white of frost; the opaque white of marble; the iridescent white of mother-of-pearl; the glistening white of silk; the dull, dry white of vellum. I sniff the pure breath of all this whiteness, and open my eyes wide to absorb it. It seems to scintillate; it is a garden of laughter and childhood.

Down among the trees at the bottom of the slope is an old red ruin, all there is left of the pile whither Wolsey crept to die of his disgrace. The sight of it revives the sense of history; images of pomp and cruelty surge in my mind, and the reflections that

arise from contemplation of the antitheses everywhere so present and so strong. How far away I am now from that laughing white garden! Then all at once I hear the sound of a mowing machine, and I come back to everyday with a start.

At Warley Place I received a novel impression. It is the garden of Miss W——, the well-known botanist—a riot of flowers, an impassioned colour-harmony, an almost savage wildness. The sense of sight seems to keep on receiving pleasure long after you would think it exhausted by new impressions, and on top of that comes a sort of mystic joy in which thoughts cease to be defined, and the sensations are like those received from music.

I remember well an enclosure full of phlox in bold reds and rose-colours, whose warmth appeared to blare with the imperious assertiveness and cruel insistency of Wagnerian brasses. In another place was a lake, bordered by drooping trees, where wan-coloured and melancholy flowers grew in a tangle of foliage, blue and grey and green, and every species of leaf, from piercing and sword-shaped to flat and fleshy plaques, with rolling silver drops that seemed to have captured the moonlight. It came to me that here the throbbing soul of Schumann might have paused to weep and sing. I had thoughts of Weber, and heard his fanfare, standing in a sort of Alpine garden, where plants sprang from the rocks, obedient to the will that bade them flourish far from their native habitat. And finally the masses of

roses, grouped with subtle concealed art, rich with scent and suggesting eternal youth and freshness, were for me a harmony like one of the andantes of Mozart, wherein he has prisoned so much rich and ever fresh perfume, and so many voices of imperishable youth.

As I walked in that garden of enchantment I was constantly allured by an unexpected harmony, or surprised by the recall of one sensation by another yet more complex. All these thousands of various flowers produced the effect of a vocal concert, where parts are sung, now by one, now by another, first low then high, now loud now soft, with unexpected variations and repetitions of the theme. I had a pleasure similar to that we have in a fugue of Bach.

Truly Warley Place is the kingdom of music.

Littlecote preserves the historic atmosphere more than any other place I saw. A prisoner of war covered with fantastic frescoes the room in which he was long confined. The great hall is hung with the leather jackets and casques of the Roundheads, all clean and polished and orderly, looking like new. In the Civil War much blood was shed around this mansion, of which it is still conscious. You feel it, too, when you make the round of relics here displayed, among which are an embroidery executed by some patient and skilful dame, the exact copy, they tell you, of a Roman pavement dug up on the estate in 1780, and some small domestic thumbscrews used to subdue refractory servants.

These refinements, as well as the visions of civil bloodshed, fade before another and a touching memory of Littlecote. It was here that William of Orange waited to hear if England was his. We know the window where he leaned and looked into the garden. Did he think of the dear Dutch gardens he was leaving behind? What cares besides ambition gnawed at his heart while his eyes roved among the lawns? Did he guess that this country, whose glory he was to re-establish, would not love him? For England never gave her affection to this, one of the best of her Kings. She reproached him with his Dutch sympathies and partialities, his harsh humours; but these were pretexts. The real reason was that, though she summoned him, he came like a conqueror. She remained dumbly defiant in face of his great service and his efficacious will. She had called to him, but he came in arms; he came with soldiers, though not a corpse marked his path. He was a foreigner, despite the blood that flowed in his veins, and this nation, that could hate the invader more frantically than any other, protested. Poor William, so strong and so weak; fervent friend, brave sufferer, solitary and obstinate soul! When they dressed him for his grave, they found on his heart a lock of hair cut from the forehead of his dear dead Queen.

It has great pathos, this chamber whence he looked into the park, while his destiny and his sorrows advanced upon him.

At Knowle I traversed great salons and dim corridors, saw famous portraits now besmoked, rich hangings long since faded, furniture whose carven silver was black with age—all sorts of treasure silted up by the past. Shadows of bygone times lurked in all the corners. My brain heavy with old dreams, I issued into the air, and the brilliant garden welcomed me. I trod the short elastic grass, and turned to look at the noble building, grey and brown. A giant magnolia-tree was trained upon the wall up to the very roof, and covered with great ivory-white flowers. A flight of ivory-white pigeons circled in the air and poised a moment among the shining leaves, flew away, returned again. They looked like great white flowers themselves, designing arabesques in the sky, borne on their own fluttering petals, then, weary, attaching themselves again to the branches of the tree, exhaling with their quickened life a perfume more powerful than the breath of summer.

My visit at Bramshill left me the supreme impression of a day crowded with delights. The façade of the house has calmly contemplative lines, and a harmony, the secret of which is unguessable, blends it with the lines of the landscape. It appears to mingle its own voice with the tones of melancholy uplifted by the hills, the earth, and the sky. No restoration has been done upon it, time alone has touched its brick and stones; thus it is an unbroken witness to the past, a continuous souvenir and a

gentle elegy. With the twilight the place becomes pervaded with sadness, in which one feels its very soul suspiring.

There are some old houses that have been adapted to modern needs, which give the same impression as elderly people who, by dint of assiduous hygiene, preserve a good waist, fresh colour, and a bright eye, and take part so blithely in youthful activities that to arrive at their age you must make calculations. But Bramshill has the touching charm of people who consent to age, and wear the fine signs upon their faces of long reveries, emotions, and sufferings whose history is forgotten. Bramshill and its ancestral family are alike retired into a past where nothing reaches them more, and where the head is bowed, not from weariness alone but from weight of memories.

The ineffable air of being compact of recollections, and the effect of disillusion with the present, come perhaps from its never having lived with its successive inhabitants in being by them modified or rebuilt. Perhaps it is marked out by destiny, for it was built in the time of James I for the youthful domain of the Prince of Wales, who died before it was complete. It may be the ancient dwelling, never having received its lord, cherishes the sadness of a forsaken bride, sitting in silence, in vain expectation and memories, while the world laughs about her.

After seeing the splendid mansion, where I was received so graciously by Lady C——, I was taken to a great drawing-room, where as it grew dark we

listened to that profound musician Ethel Smyth sing songs born of the breath of the wind and the surge of the English tides; and songs of homesickness, for souls whose hearts' desire for ever escapes them. I could see from the lofty windows the heavy clouds hurrying over the sky, and the lawns that slope gently to the near-by wood, whence shadows were already issuing and spreading. Those were minutes of poignant, unforgettable charm. With the music the old house spoke to me in whispers; it murmured its name: the Castle of Regret.

In the garden of Nuneham Courtney there is a rock in which is fixed a large plaque with some lines engraved upon it. The old verses relate how in the eighteenth century a gardener, who adored his flowers, died suddenly upon this spot. I imagine how death may have met him as he pruned the roses, heavy with blossoms and scent as these are now. Happy gardener, who loved his flowers and died among them! I paused a moment upon the spot where death had laid a gentle hand upon him. That sweet and solicitous soul is surely not now exiled from its Paradise—surely it wanders here among the flowers. Happy gardener, who never knew the bitterness of suffering, endurance, confinement, separation from the roses he loved, who never knew the pains of life or the pangs of death. Happy gardener, who, his task done, could cease from life in an English garden!

CHAPTER XI

AN AFTERNOON OUT OF SORTS

"Alas for human grandeur! Wherever I turn I find death confronting me."—BOSSUET.

THE atmosphere is dubious, and a sickly sun imbues the haze with sallow gold. Is it a fog that hangs over everything, or a fine suspended dust? I see what Londoners mean when they say sometimes that the air is "exhausted." I am tempted to think that all the live oxygen has been hermetically sealed up inside the infinitesimal drops of moisture or particles of dust composing this yellow veil that blurs the eyes and the mind. I imagine some sadness is weighing on my spirits—but it is not that, it is ennui.

It is an ennui that makes you quite passive, that puts to sleep your interests and your taste for effort, and slyly slips the bonds that knit you to life. I think the Hindu Nirvana must be a state like London ennui. No desire but the desire to do nothing; no wish to be elsewhere, simply the wish not to be. You have no ill-feeling you can put your finger on, only the certitude that nothing is worth anything, and that the best would be to fade far away and dissolve into this fog that deadens all objects while

hiding none. You think the fog is symbolic of the non-resistant but invincible obstacles that interpose between the soul and some perfect joy it sees, but cannot even desire. I know why the English are so fond of Italy. If any longing could pierce my sleepy brain on this sullen afternoon it would be for light—dry, clear, hard, cutting shadows like a knife. But I doubt such light exists! What is the matter with me? Is this English "spleen"? At all events it is what I call "spleen": a death of the will-power. I feel intolerably free, for I have no desires—hideous freedom! In such a mood I go to the Tower. I do not know why, but I go.

The old fortress looks morose. It is bored, too. Its boredom is that of a retired hangman who finds life flat, lacking in colour and picturesque incident. The Tower has "spleen." It was precisely the spot to visit on a grey and yellow afternoon.

I wonder if there is another place in the world so full of accumulated and diverse history, and so well preserving the memory of its past? Our Louvre, the Florentine and Spanish palaces, the castles of Germany, and even the Vatican, have partly obliterated their memories. But here they all remain in force—though the place is a museum to boot—and in the foreground, especially the tragedy.

It was a palace. Only since James II have the sovereigns ceased to make it a residence. They held fêtes here, laughed and danced, played the *viola d'amore*, and struck the chords of love—here in these

walls. One listens in vain for echoes from the songs of life—all dead, all slain. The spirits of the beauteous knights and tender ladies who lived here of their own free will and died natural deaths have all chosen some other place to renew their interrupted songs. The ghosts of the Tower are Richard II, who here tasted the despair of abdication, more bitter than death, and hence was conveyed to be murdered at Pomfret; Henry VI, whom they stabbed; the two little Princes, whose cries and sobs and life they smothered together; Anne, the Queen of the delicate neck, who was here tried, condemned, and slain—and others, oh, many, many others!

I followed the troop of English making the round of these souvenirs with zest and satisfaction—all well disguised. We went up a stairway to the cabinet where the Crown jewels display their brilliant rays and parti-coloured fires.

What is the mystery resident in precious stones? Why, in every age and clime, have they so fascinated the human spirit? Because they are rare? But other things of equal or greater rarity do not so impose upon attention or desire. Because they glitter? But not everything that glitters disturbs the imagination, and, besides, false gems, which can be so well made as to deceive the eye and the touch, would have lessened the appeal of the real gems.

Mingled with the pleasure of looking at gems there is usually the idea of possession—mark that. When

you admire a picture you do not at once see it on your walls, but you do not look at a diamond without imagining it yours. Gowns and hats are a more practical aid to a woman's beauty than a necklace, but the necklace will excite an intensity of desire out of all proportion greater. That it costs more does not seem the whole explanation, though probably the precious stone better satisfies vanity because it is the accepted and conventional symbol of wealth. A symbol—that, I should say, is the secret. Gems are symbols, not only of wealth, but of power, and even of righteousness. They represent all the forms of grandeur. They have been pronounced indispensable to the brow of Kings, but they are used as well to glorify the shrines of holy martyrs and humble saints.

Why should they so supremely express to men's eyes the themes of conquest, victory, and success? Does the atomic action that produces for our senses the colour of the ruby, the hardness of the diamond, and the perfidious gleam of the emerald represent forces which act upon us without our knowledge, and give us certain unexplainable sensations? Singular virtues have been attributed to precious stones by the alchemists, those dreamers who dreamed so much that is to-day reality, whom Bacon so unjustly called "those charcoal-burners who pretend to found a science on distillation." And before the alchemists the Arabs, and before them the Greeks, and before all, no doubt, the omniscient Serpent, who very likely beguiled the long dull days for Eve in Paradise with stories

about the powers and properties of precious stones.

Some day we may ascertain in the brilliant pebbles energies that have the power to heighten human energies, and scientists will tell us just why it gives one vigour and personality and power to wear them. The slow-moving mind of man will recognize the sources of power which his more rapidly working instincts found out long ago, and we shall know that it was not a puerile error to make jewels the object of such strong desire, and attribute to them such active properties.

I have never seen the symbolism of precious stones more irresistibly exhibited than in that room in the Tower where English subjects stood looking at the English crown. For all of them, the rubies, emeralds, and diamonds were the visible image of royalty. They lowered their voices as though in an august presence, but their eyes showed pride. The King was there before them, and with him the national pride that flourishes at the height of their individual pride. They walked slowly and with constraint as in a church. The jewels made them assert their loyalty in physical ways, as the sudden sight of a beloved person makes one feel one's love through all one's fibres.

Outside of the room the spell was broken, voices were louder, and steps quicker. The blocks and hatchets, the instruments of torture, and the trophies succeeded each other, and we came to the

splendid and well-arranged collection of suits of armour.

I stopped fascinated before one of them. It is of simple design, seated upon a horse likewise iron-clad. It looks like a living man. No clothing could preserve in such detail, with such striking exactitude, the form, the gesture, almost the breath of the body that had dwelt in it. Under the broad flat, steel plates, modelled as flexibly as wax, one divines the man and reconstructs his physical habit: the breath coming in short thick pants that lift the breast-plate, the inflated stomach, the congested liver, the fatty heart, the brain gorged with blood. You can tell how the hand stretched and contracted inside the gauntlet, and you imagine two hard dull eyes looking through the holes in the casque. It is the armour of Henry VIII. No portrait could so reveal the secrets of his body and his soul. You see the brute-like impulsiveness of the man, his vanity, his disconcerting mixture of slowness and suddenness; his muscles robust in spite of corpulence, his guile, unconsciousness, cowardice, and mistrust, his irreducible pride—and above all the formidable certitude of his will, the impossibility of its ever giving way. It rather alarms one—will he move? Will his voice come thickly through the steel mask, issuing an order to chop off somebody's head? That too impressive armour roots you to the spot.

What a frightful man, Henry VIII! It is a peculiar thing that the worst Kings of this country should have served her so well. The rascally John

gave her her Great Charter, and this one did perhaps even better in separating her from Rome. The truth is, despite his vices, he was perfectly English: sensual and conjugal, furious, apparently illogical—for if he hanged the Catholics he burned the Protestants—but fundamentally logical in pursuit of his real passion, the breaking down of opposition, the enforcing of his will regardless. Cruel for cruelty's sake, certainly, but also for the frantic lust of authority; with all this mad upon theology, and not entirely by force of circumstances, but partly also by natural bent. Remember that before the rupture he was greeted by the Pope with the splendid title of Defender of the Faith. This by way of reward for having written a book, the "Septem Sacramentes," confuting the errors of Luther. His atrocities he committed because he was at bottom an utter brute, and nobody stopped him. But discounting the manners of his age which he hideously reflected, his personal vices and his individual mediocrity, you arrive at the great dominating instinct which has made the English race so powerful. Perhaps the ferocity of Henry VIII was merely an anachronism, a force without direction, which operated blindly, not finding its mark. Who knows? Henry VIII may have been the first Imperialist.

I issued from the place of intolerable despair called Beauchamp Tower, where I had made out, in the dismal gloom, the patient inscriptions of many

captives. Those walls can never console themselves for the sights they have seen; they seem to exhale in perpetual sighs and heavy sobs. Most touching of all is the poor little name *Jane* scratched in the stone by the delicate girl who reigned some days a Queen despite herself, and then died terribly.

I waited on the square where executions took place, for the guide who was to open the chapel where the illustrious victims—for the most part innocent—were afterwards laid. My heart sank. It seemed to me I had come to the very palace of death, to hear reckoned amid maniac laughter not the tale of his every-day harvest, but the feast he gives himself when he is drunken and will revel. I listened. Suddenly I saw—was it there before, or did it just rise out of the earth?—a crow. A strange crow, prodigiously old, bald, ragged, meagre, rusted with age, bearing itself with fearful immobility. I could see it was very feeble, and I could feel it was immortal. It saw nothing about it—it saw other things. That sinister creature dying and persisting, congealed by ancient horrors, was the genius of the Tower. Looking at it I heard more than ever the harsh voice and horrible cruel laugh in my ear.

The guide has come back; there is the sound of a key in the lock, and we are in the chapel, of which Macaulay wrote after describing the execution of Monmouth:

"Death is there associated, not, as in West-

minster Abbey and St. Paul's, with genius and virtue, with public veneration and imperishable renown; not, as in our humblest churches and churchyards, with everything that is most endearing in social and domestic charities, but with whatever is darkest in human nature and in human destiny, with the savage triumph of implacable enemies, with the inconstancy, the ingratitude, the cowardice of friends, with all the miseries of fallen greatness and of blighted fame. Thither have been carried, through successive ages, by the rude hands of gaolers, without one mourner following, the bleeding relics of men who had been the captains of armies, the leaders of parties, the oracles of senates, and the ornaments of courts. Thither was borne, before the window where Jane Grey was praying, the mangled corpse of Guilford Dudley. Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset and Protector of the Realm, reposes there by the brother whom he murdered. There has mouldered away the headless trunk of John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester and Cardinal of Saint Vitalis, a man worthy to have lived in a better age, and to have died in a better cause. There are laid John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, Lord High Admiral, and Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex, Lord High Treasurer. There, too, is another Essex, on whom nature and fortune had lavished all their bounties in vain, and whom valour, grace, genius, royal favour, popular applause, conducted to an early and ignominious doom. Here and there, among the thick graves of unquiet and aspiring statesmen, lie more delicate sufferers: Margaret of

Salisbury, the last of the proud name of Plantagenet, and those two fair Queens who perished by the jealous rage of Henry. Such was the dust with which the dust of Monmouth mingled."

This chapel, truly, resembles no other. The guide relates with quiet relish his list of murders, memorials of the fickleness, cruelty, and injustice of English Kings. The guide is not ashamed of his narrative. When a French cicerone exhibits the misdeeds of the ancient régime or the barbarities of the Revolution, he suggests in the very accent of the words he knows by rote a sense of the total rupture between past and present. Thank heaven, we have nothing to do with all that. We are quite different from the people who did and suffered all those atrocities. As for the Revolution—ah, well, a revolution is extraordinary, a convulsive crisis, a temporary frenzy. There is a gulf between us and it. But here, where no gulf at all divides what was from what is ? . . .

The sense of continuity conveyed by everything—ideas, opinions, facts, even new ones—is nowhere more evident than here in the Tower. The fortress does not speak of cataclysms and accessions of brief popular violence, or the evil deeds of one or several individuals. It speaks of every day, of long spaces of time, belonging to our conceptions of the actual and consecutive with the present. The guide accepted, even venerated, the past; it is the past of his people, and all its crimes are the crimes of monarchs, nobles, and gentry, whom he naturally respects. He feels that everything has fallen out

just as it should, or if it has not it is nobody's affair. If you tell him his anecdotes are horrible, he conceives it to be a compliment, and smiles with pride.

I fled the chapel, worn out with the strain, and sat down to rest—on the place of executions. The crow had not moved, and continued to look at something invisible.

There was a stir in the court, and people began to gather there in attitudes of expectancy. A strapping Scotchman in a kilt stepped out with his bagpipe, put the mouthpiece to his lips, and played. The shrill, sharp, piercing notes, with a suggestion of twang, shook out in the foggy air. The wild rhythm burst into a climax; the bleak old Tower vanished, the splenetic fog was dissipated, and gave place to clear bright landscapes full of cold pure lakes and slopes of deepest green, where Highlanders leaped and shouted with furious joy. With such scenes evoked by the music the images of tragedy and death struggled and sought to dominate—then suddenly the real obtained again. The crow was still there, full of his old evil dreams; I was conscious of the neighbourhood of that suit of armour once worn by the Sovereign who slew Queens, and out of desire for a woman freed his kingdom from the bonds of Rome; I remembered the tragic chapel, the staircase where they buried the Princes, and the place of executions. The bagpipe played louder and faster; finally, at the end of a long series of visions of murders and bloody deeds, I came upon my

memory of the room where are preserved the precious stones that represent the majesty of England, and there I touched the link that bound together all my visions.

This is the land where continued discord evokes a harmony, where all contrasts mingle peaceably, where no whisper of the past is negligible or to be reprobated, for all that has been supports and serves all that is and will be. It is the land of everlasting.

The autumn sun gilded the top of the Tower. My " spleen " was gone.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

"The pleasure of admiration lies in this: that, having once discerned in any object admirable qualities, we proceed to discover in it innumerable other qualities which so far surpass those first discerned that we can neither comprehend nor attain unto them."

CERTAIN well-informed, thoughtful—and pessimistic—English say that the genius of the nation, which seems to us so unalterably fixed in its own peculiar and beautiful lines, is on the point of modification; indeed, that profound changes have already taken place.

When you hear these sombre prognostications upon the state of the English character and the health of her body social, you feel—perhaps mistakenly—that they are due to the discovery of the democratic spirit in her midst, as something novel and dismaying, and rising from tendencies new and contrary to the English character, tendencies which the true and native traditions of the race can counteract if they will, and if they are aroused and made aware of the danger and their duty. In other words, these disquieted conservatives feel that England is free to withstand a universal movement.

They attribute any deviation from the forms of the past to two things: attacks made upon those

forms by one class of people, and inadequate resistance to attack on the part of another class To some of the deviations they assign precise causes, as, for instance, the influence of the American spirit. America having made its gigantic development without the support and direction of an hereditary aristocracy, they argue that the genius of America is definitely opposed to theirs, even antagonistic, and that if such a spirit is introduced into England it will strike at the roots of the traditions that have created and conducted her people. These pessimists say that the American spirit encroaches more every day, and that England every day more submits. More and more she blinds herself to the knowledge that the flaws she can so well see in the enterprising race across the Atlantic are to be her own inheritance of to-morrow. For they are only the expression of Anglo-Saxon energy, deprived of the salutary restraint of an aristocracy venerated, adored, obeyed, and imitated through many centuries.

It would be idle to deny that the "American spirit" is at work upon them, and not only on them but on everybody else. It is an historical necessity. Yet not from America, nor from France, nor from any particular point of the compass does the wind blow which the English gentleman sees with such concern as it tosses the tops of his ancestral oaks. It blows to-day from all quarters, and as little as any other nation can England check it or refuse its compulsion.

I admit that there is ground for anxiety. The levelling of their aristocracy means for the English the suppression of an ideal. Now let the ultimate benefit of such a movement be what it may, it carries very grave risk.

It is a people that for long has joyfully sacrificed itself to maintain a certain class in splendid integrity, regarding it with an ecstatic contemplation that rewards the humblest lives with some portion of beauty and nobility. The aristocracy becomes a branch of religion—sometimes all of it—a lofty and reassuring ideal compact of power, riches, right, and authority. The gentleman must necessarily inherit the generous instincts of his ancestors; having always enjoyed fortune and honour he has not learned the sordid preoccupations that cling to a precarious state. His character cannot be betrayed by passion for the material interests imposed by necessity. Long habit has fixed the grand manner upon him, both inwardly and outwardly, and nothing in his life hinders the free flowering of that beautiful thing. He and his forbears have always lived in a sphere where moral and physical mediocrity, compromise, and cowardice get no chance. His defects and vices are individual accidents, and his personal shortcomings can in no way invalidate his caste. His words have a weight and sacredness resident in them, as it were, by right of heredity. He is set above existences encumbered with inevitable vulgarities for a type of splendour and perfection, a model to be imitated from afar and cherished in dreams.

When the English shall have abandoned this ideal—for they will abandon it, slowly, painfully, inevitably—well, what will they put in its place ?

No other nation so much as England needs a superb, unimpeachable, concrete image of the ideal to help it subdue its own roughness and egoism. It does not, like Germany, possess the instinct for submission, a sort of mechanical aptitude for obedience, a conceited brain and a humble heart. England is a proud and rebellious spirit, capable of self-conquest only if authority represent itself in a way that will first reassure and then exalt its pride. Brute force could never break such a spirit, nor persuasive eloquence, nor abstract reasoning. The spring to touch is the religious instinct; it is that in the English which their cult of the gentleman satisfies, which makes them accept that cult with passionate snobbery. In reality their snobbery is the naive affirmation of a taste for the best and most elevated, and a dislike of the mean. They are snobbish simply out of their inability to choose without help a generalized ideal.

The Englishman's incapacity in this respect is proportionate to his power of constructing a silent inner life adapted to himself alone, and without formulas. He has great need for reverence, but he must attach his reverence to an outward type already concentrated for him by tradition and, as it were, hall-marked. Such a type he has found in the gentleman: predestined for the conduct of public affairs, since he has leisure; honourable, for he has no necessities; careful for his own and his country's

glory, for he has the reputation of his ancestors to sustain. There is much shrewdness in the conception. For if the English aristocracy has not all the virtues with which popular piety endows it, it has at least what one might call a professional sense that supplies the place of many merits, or at least will develop or imitate them. Its leaders, whether intelligent or not, talented or commonplace, have felt a responsibility, though they may not always have been able to define it. They have been so sure of their Divine rights that it followed naturally for others to take them as sacred prerogatives. In identifying their interests with the nation they have become less egoistic. The people believe in them and always have, because they believe in themselves.

Despite its hardships the creed has always been a tonic and a purge to the English spirit. It has combated very strong material instincts with the salutary principle of disinterestedness. Soon perhaps that creed will perish. When the English aristocracy loses its power—by which alone it can demonstrate its beauty and virtue—will this headstrong and individualistic people preserve the ideals of beauty and virtue which the aristocracy incarnated for them? They will do what others have done: find something else to worship and transfer their allegiance. An object for veneration is their necessity. Will they be able to make themselves that object, and, substituting themselves for the Deity, take another step forwards in their development? Eventually, but not at once. They are not yet ready to see in themselves the elements of an

idol capable of replacing the old one. They are far too used to respect in themselves nothing but the ideals and sentiments which they associate with the resplendent forms of aristocracy. The support of those ideals will be gone. Their conception of themselves, in losing the model toward which it strives, will lose in loftiness. They will be cut off from part of their aspirations toward the good, the beautiful, and the great, when they have deposed the ideal which embodied those virtues. Instead of being increased, their sense of personal dignity will be at first diminished, for up to now their pride has been centred far outside of themselves. Their patriotic ardour likewise will suffer some loss in the same way. In all directions they will be checked, thrown off their balance, and take their first new steps with hesitation. The process of adjustment will take more than a day. They lack the qualities which would help them quickly and easily to substitute the democratic ideal for the aristocratic. They will probably find at length the means to replace their religion of sentiment with a religion of the intellect. But there will be an interval during which they will be like a man of religious temperament who has lost his God—a dangerous being!

Their passion for the gentleman has given employment and exercise to the virtues of tenderness and self-forgetfulness, and thus acted as the balance-wheel of too much self. I have been told that in meetings of International Congresses, when the motions of French members are put forward, the English are always amused by the ideology and

sentimentality in which our compatriots involve their projects. The English confine themselves to the practical, to the immediate, and narrow interest—no dreams, no vain and superfluous good-fellowship! Each nation for itself, maintaining its right and sticking to its point. For this is a world of harsh realities.

When they have nothing left but themselves to revere and love, a people essentially realistic will probably discover to the world some traits of violence heretofore unmanifested. Perhaps their deadly class war will not have, as elsewhere, its moments of relaxation, amenity, enthusiasm, nor those appeasements which come about as the result of an ardent or emotional speech, an inspiring appeal to an ideal. The English are not on the whole susceptible to such appeals—they do not natively perceive beauty in the idea. They accept one, if it is proffered by someone in whom they have confidence. But when their cult of the gentleman is abolished, it will be necessary to find and select this someone anew. It will take all the magnificent energy of the Englishman to adapt himself to a change which involves a thorough overhauling of his inner mechanism. He must set himself to think—a process he always finds irksome; and think quickly—which has so far regularly been impossible. He must sharpen his critical sense, to put limits upon his vanity, introduce suspicion of hitherto undoubted certainties—those of his own rights, in the first place—and to suggest doubts to his mind, and the troublesome idea of the existence and the interests

of others. To slough off easily his treasured ideal of the gentleman the Englishman would have to make himself over.

He is beginning, they say, to do it. Premonitions of change have appeared. Already, the pessimists assert, old values have been subverted; to-day, love of money gets the better of all else—holds the place but lately held by pride of birth in some, by deference for birth in others. It is true we are struck, sometimes a little astonished, to see what a rôle is played in England by money, or the want of it. But I question if the tendency is exclusively modern or exclusively American.

England, as everyone knows, is the country where it is the hardest to get on without money. The climate makes it impossible without money to be cleanly, cheerful, or mentally calm. The Englishman without possessions is not wholly an Englishman. He naturally hates the poverty which destroys in him not only his personality, but the national type as well. And he not only hates poverty, he despises it. Many of his strongest virtues are his solely because he has "means." He is proud, patient, kindly, generous, responsible—all because it is in his power to dispense freely. Want and misery very quickly degrade him. He needs money in order to realize himself, and he knows it. With us we do a hundred politenesses to money, but we accord it no respect. In England it is hugely respected, for without it one can scarcely be respect-

able! But is this anything new? Is it more striking than it used to be? It is possible; the pessimists regard it as a fact. And if it be true that the appetite to enjoy and to make a figure are on the increase in England, the pessimists have a right to their alarm, for it is certainly the fact that the appetite for work has been rapidly diminishing.

To us, who put such a sum of energy into our careers, our professions, our business, whatever it may be, the leisure the English allow themselves is stupefying. Happy English, imprudent English! Verily humanity ought not eternally to destroy itself with excess of effort, verily we are all advancing toward the time when there will be less of care and more repose. And yet is it perfectly wise to put oneself in the van of the procession? You may let pass on the way many precious things which others will pick up.

On a tomb in the church at Dorchester is the effigy of a strange knight. His name—they think—is John Holcombe, and he was laid there toward the end of the thirteenth century.

I have never passed through the charming little town without stopping to see John Holcombe. He is so expressive! Do you imagine he lies on his tomb, grave, composed, oblivious, dreaming the eternal dream? No. He is half in a sitting posture, as though just rising with a movement of all his tense

body, his large eyes open, his face working with a terrible and splendid fury. He grasps his sword with frantic gesture, is about to draw it, will be up in a second and assume the offensive. The enemy is there, perhaps? Ah, the enemy is always there! He wakes threatening, prepared for the fray. The sculptor who carved that stone knew well that the dead who made England do not sleep so easily, and that their superb fury, their proud and indomitable wills, persist.

At the door of the church I have sometimes seen splendid boys, robust in their white flannel as John Holcombe in his armour. They walk with a firm elastic tread, their eyes full of life and careless gaiety. They are going to play tennis, or golf, or cricket.

There is wavering, anger, trouble, dismay, and the sound of conflict in England. Menaces hang over that land of power, of pride and glory. But what matter, after all? It is England, where the instinct of resistance to destruction is stronger than destruction. She has known many times of trouble, more tragic uncertainties, more fearful struggles; and she is—England!

THE END

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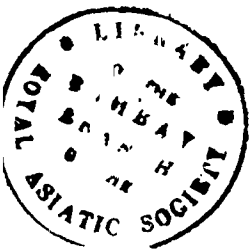

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